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MARTIN HEIDEGGER

BY

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To

GERHARD KRÜGER

whose work represents the best tradition
of German philosophical scholarship and
the best influence of existentialism

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M. G.

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I

Introduction

Jede wesentliche Gestalt des Geistes steht in der Zweideutigkeit.

Every essential configuration of the mind is ambiguous.

Heidegger

Most people who know of Heidegger know of him as one of a group of writers—Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Marcel, Sartre and others—who expound in their different ways a philosophy called ‘existentialism’: a philosophy concerned not with high-flown metaphysics and cosmological speculation but with personal inwardness, with personal integrity, with ‘myself’ in my struggle to be ‘myself’. In the form given currency by Sartre this seemed to many the most striking new departure of post-war thinking on the Continent; and Heidegger, as one of the more mystifying masters of the doctrine, was included in its popularity. The name of the movement, and a few slogans associated with it, were for a time perhaps too much in vogue: it is healthier for philosophy to be protest than fashion. Yet the fashion in this case was not capricious; there was good reason for it in the contemporary mood and in the heritage that produced it. And the last word of existentialism did indeed lie with Heidegger. The innovations of Sartre are for the most part inessential and to some extent inconsistent with it. If we leave out of consideration the religious

problems raised by Kierkegaard, the philosophical contribution of existentialism was most purely and intensely formulated in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*, 1927). As the author of *Sein und Zeit*, therefore, Heidegger occupies a unique place in the intellectual history of our time.

Yet Heidegger, in the *Letter on Humanism* (1949), has emphatically denied that he was ever an existentialist. His work is unified, according to his own account, not by any theme as 'subjective' or 'psychological' as personal existence, but by the constant preoccupation with and devotion to a profounder and harder topic, in which, admittedly, personal existence is deeply entangled—that is, 'die Seinsfrage', the quest for Being. And it is true that every single work of Heidegger, all the way back to his inaugural dissertation, is directed, one way or another, to this ontological quest. Even in *Sein und Zeit*, as we shall see, the investigation of personal existence is ancillary to the search for Being itself. 'My Being' is to be examined *because* I am the sort of creature who asks about 'Being'. It is that asking, and its answer, which really count. By his own account Heidegger is first and last and always not an existentialist at all, but an ontologist: one who would restore Being to its rightful place in our thought, to the power it lost, according to him, in the time of Plato. If he has been interested in personal existence, it is because the question of human nature and the question of Being are inextricably entangled together, are even

in a sense coterminous. As he put it in a recent essay:

Jede philosophische, d.h. denkende Lehre vom Wesen des Menschen ist *in sich schon* Lehre vom Sein des Seienden. Jede Lehre vom Sein ist *in sich schon* Lehre vom Wesen des Menschen. . . .

In jedem der beiden Glieder der Beziehung zwischen Menschenwesen und Sein liegt schon die Beziehung selber.

Every philosophical, i.e. thinking doctrine of the nature of man is *in itself already* a doctrine of the Being of the things that are. Every doctrine of Being is *in itself already* a doctrine of the nature of man. . . .

In each of the two terms of the relation between human nature and Being the relation itself is already present.¹

And as between the two terms, human nature and Being, it is on Being that the philosopher's attention is chiefly focused. For the question 'What is Being?'—or, as Heidegger likes to state it, 'What is the Being of the things that are?'—is the one serious question of philosophy.

This is far from what passes for existentialism. We must admit that Heidegger is right. His aim in philosophizing was never at one with the purpose, say, or either Kierkegaard or Sartre, who, different as they are, are both in a definite and meaningful sense 'existential' thinkers. So much we must grant of Heidegger's protest.

Yet there is an existentialist Heidegger: a Heidegger whose existence Heidegger himself

¹ *Was heisst Denken?* p. 73.

denies, but who is, nevertheless, the Heidegger that matters most, whose place in intellectual history is assured, who has, in Heidegger's sense, a 'destiny'. For it is the incisive, devastating insight into the ultimate loneliness of individual existence, the philosophical formulation of the place of death in life, that is noteworthy in Heidegger. This is an 'existentialist' insight, which was in fact embedded in, but is nevertheless independent of its ontological frame. In fairness to the man who denies his existentialist affiliation, we must, it is true, view him as an ontologist. Yet in fairness to his decisive role in the history of existentialism, and to the decisive role of existentialism in contemporary thought, we must discount his ontology in order to evaluate, distinctly from it, the analysis of personal existence. For it is here, though he denies it, that his solid merit is chiefly to be found.

This statement must be further qualified in two directions. First, I must insist at the outset that I have not made it for the purpose of separating the existential theme, with its obvious human relevance, from the ontological theme as having, *qua* ontology, no relevance to anything. The weakness of even the best of existential writing is precisely that it lacks a proper grounding in an adequate ontology. It is a floating philosophy—vivid as autumn leaves, but as incapable as they of taking hold again of a parent branch. In this it is neither better nor worse than the analytical philosophy in vogue elsewhere. The trouble with Heidegger's ontology is not that it is ontology, but that it is

spurious ontology; while his existentialism (we must call it that despite his disclaimer) expresses the ultimate insight of that tradition; the very heart of the existentialist message.

The other qualification is a temporal one. In the *Letter on Humanism* Heidegger denies that his work was ever existentialist in any sense that would justify his critics in affiliating him with Kierkegaard, let alone Sartre. On the other hand, if we start by distinguishing the existential from the metaphysical theme, we shall notice a difference in relative emphasis between *Sein und Zeit* and most of Heidegger's later writing. It is true that from the beginning the ostensible theme, the framework, is the quest for Being. That is the constant Grail. And it is true that even in recent publications this most abstract of questions is equated with the question: what is man? In fact the *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1953) still enthrones the authentic individual, the subject of *Sein und Zeit*. Yet there is a difference. In the beginning, personal existence; dread, time, finitude loom large. Later, Being itself displaces these concepts and overruns their confines. The concepts of 'history' and 'destiny' unite the two periods; but in the earlier work it is personal destiny, in the later the destiny of 'Being itself'.

This change of emphasis or direction, moreover, is paralleled by a striking change in style and tone between the earlier and later writings. *Sein und Zeit* is written in a contorted and arbitrary style, hopelessly untranslatable into English, some say

even into German; and its argument is buried under a heap of paradoxical pronouncements. Yet for all its verbosity and its arrogance, there is in it a direct, driving compression: its words, though many, are less than the passion behind it. But Heidegger's writing has since become, in part more cramped and cryptic (though even then heavily repetitive) and in part more sweepingly rhetorical (the latter under the influence of his two great masters Hölderlin and Nietzsche). The later publications make on the whole smoother reading; but they say much less.

We are faced, then, in interpreting Heidegger, on the one hand with the totality of his career so far: the career of a consistent and undeviating seeker after Being, and on the other with the impact of his principal work, which seems, despite its avowed metaphysical purpose, somehow at a tangent to the rest. Keeping this difficulty in mind, I shall consider: (1) the principal content and structure of *Sein und Zeit*, (2) the contribution of Heidegger, through *Sein und Zeit*, to philosophical thought, (3) his book on Kant (*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 1929) as a link between the first and second phase of his work, (4) the *Introduction to Metaphysics* (published in 1953) as an example of the later ontological writings, (5) the relation of the later to the earlier work.

II

Being and Time

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark.

T. S. Eliot

I

Sein und Zeit, as published in 1927, was the first volume of a work which was to renew the forgotten, but pressing problem: what is Being? The second volume was to achieve a 'destruction' of traditional ontology by going back through Kant, Descartes and Aristotle to an earlier spring of ontological insight. Of this only some reflections on Kant were published; but an urge to return to the purer vision of pre-Socratic philosophy has been a persistent theme in Heidegger's thought. Moreover, both this historical atavism and its systematic expression have been focused, first and last, on 'die Seinsfrage', the quest for Being. What concerns us here is the point at which, in seeking 'the sense of Being' ('den Sinn des Seins'), Heidegger found it essential to this end to analyse what we may perhaps call 'human being'. I am here translating by 'human being' the German expression 'Dasein'. It is not an entirely adequate translation, but I cannot think of a better, and used in this way it has in English at any rate a queerness not unlike the oddity of the German word in Heidegger's usage. It is human being, then, that Heidegger sets out to describe—since it *is* the vehicle and the mirror of

Being: and as it is, so is the Being it bears and reflects.

This metaphysical purpose of the work is stated in the introduction to *Sein und Zeit*. The first part (that is, of the first and only existent volume) is called 'the preparatory fundamental analysis of human being' ('Die vorbereitende Fundamentalanalyse des Daseins'). In it Heidegger is seeking to describe, by Husserl's phenomenological method, the basic structure of this being which we are.¹ It is shown to consist of three fundamental aspects together constituting one unified whole. Thus at page 191 Heidegger writes:

Die fundamentalen ontologischen Charaktere dieses Seienden sind Existentialität, Faktizität, und Verfallensein. Diese existentialen Bestimmungen gehören nicht als Stücke zu einem Kompositum, daran zuweilen eines fehlen könnte, sondern in ihnen webt ein ursprünglicher Zusammenhang, der die gesuchte Ganzheit des Strukturganzen ausmacht. In der Einheit der genannten Seinsbestimmungen des Daseins wird dessen Sein als solches ontologisch fassbar.

The fundamental ontological characteristics of this being are existentiality, facticity and forfeiture.

¹ The relation of Heidegger to Husserl and phenomenology is best stated, in English, in E. L. Allen's *Existentialism from Within* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953) and in Helmuth Kuhn's *Encounter with Nothingness* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1949). There is also a German edition of Kuhn's book: *Die Begegnung mit dem Nichts*, Tübingen, 1950.

These existential determinations do not belong as bits to a composite whole, in such a way that one might be missing, but in them there is entwined a fundamental relationship, which constitutes that wholeness of the whole structure for which we have been seeking. In the unity of the aforementioned determinations of Being possessed by human being, its being is ontologically comprehensible as such.

The path to this statement is a long and thorny one, and I shall not try to follow it in detail. For one thing, these three 'characteristics' are introduced through an analysis of dread ('Angst') as a 'unique disposition' of human being ('ausgezeichnete Befindlichkeit'). But in view of the crucial role of dread in the argument of Part Two, I prefer to consider it in that context. Moreover, the path is nearly impassable—and that for two reasons. First, there is the difficulty of following in detail the intricacies and obscurities of Heidegger's language. Secondly, there is an even more serious barrier, exemplified in the passage just quoted. These are, Heidegger says, 'ontological' characteristics of human being: in their unity its being is 'ontologically' comprehensible as such. He spends much space in stressing, at every step, the ontological import of his analysis, and, in particular, in distinguishing between his basic categories or 'Existenzialen'—the ontological characters of human being—and all that is 'existentiell', i.e., factually occurring in some case or other. As far as the analysis of human being is concerned, this emphasis seems to me to obscure rather than to

clarify the argument.¹ So I prefer, though admittedly deviating in this from the author's own intention, to concentrate on the more narrowly 'existential' theme. I shall therefore leave 'ontological' detail as far as possible out of account and look roughly at the major points of Heidegger's analysis of human being. We shall have to consider later the whole problem of his ontological aims.²

To return, then, to page 191 and the three fundamental characteristics of human being. Heidegger listed them in the order: existentiality, facticity and forfeiture; but it is facticity with which his analysis begins.

1. *Facticity* means that human being is always one being among others—not in the sense of being one pebble on the beach or even one fish in the sea—but in the sense that at one and the same time it finds at its disposal things it can handle and finds itself determined by the things it must suffer. Human being is being always already in a world: a world into which, beyond its willing, it has been cast (*geworfen*).

'World' here is not first and foremost the enormous, indefinitely extended cosmos of astronomy and physics. 'World' for Heidegger is not

¹ It must be admitted that E. L. Allen (*op. cit.*) is conscientiously and even successfully faithful to the distinction in his excellent chapter on Heidegger.

² However one evaluates Heidegger's ontology, one can still, for the purpose of exposition, make this separation: as J. Pfeiffer, for example, does in his beautifully lucid little book (*Existenzphilosophie*; Hamburg: Richard Meiner Verlag, 1933; 2e verbesserte Auflage, 1949).

the world, but 'world' rather in the sense in which one speaks of the 'world of sports'—i.e., a common sphere of activity or interest—or the 'world of Shakespeare'—i.e. the time and the society which affects and is affected by a personality—or most typically perhaps, of two people as 'worlds apart'—i.e., the mental universe, the perspective through which one's physical, geographical, historical environment becomes one's very own. Heidegger denies that 'world' in this sense is subjective. It contains in common-sense fashion the shoes and ships and sealing-wax which assure its everyday solidity. It contains even, as a facet of itself, the uniformly extended material world constructed by science. But it is also the world in which we find the knife of which Housman wrote:

I need but stick it in my heart,
And down will come the sky.
The earth's foundations will depart,
And all you folk—will die.

Facticity, in other words, is personal facticity: not the anonymous, indifferent cause-and-effect mechanism of dead nature, but the uniquely given *that* of myself in my situation. It is the fact that I am always already in a world, in the sense in which my world is *my* world: it could no more be world without me than I could be myself without it.

Heidegger's view of world, or of things-in-the-world (innerweltliches Seiendes), has sometimes been compared to Dewey's. Certainly, in its interpretation of objects, Heidegger's theory is markedly

pragmatic. Things are for him not Cartesian *res extensae*, bits just there (vorhanden) in an indifferent space; they are stuff for use (Zeug), which are at hand (zuhanden) for our handling (hantieren). For Heidegger as for Bergson man is *homo faber* before he is *homo sapiens*: it is materials, tools, opportunities by which he finds himself surrounded. Thus the flicker of a motor car serves Heidegger as a specially revealing instance of a thing at hand within the world: without its function, tied to the rule of the road and to a whole nexus of customs and habits and histories, it could not be described as existing at all.

Yet this is only to say that Heidegger, Dewey and Bergson all participate in a twentieth-century revolt against the simple world-picture of Descartes or Newton: a revolt which, after all, the history of science itself would equally have necessitated. But within this common trend, Heidegger's concept of facticity, in its deeper intention, points in a direction different from Dewey's. It is not the new-world buoyancy of pragmatism, sure of making a better world by sheer force of common sense, that supports it, but a deeply European sense of historical dependence, of entanglement. 'Geworfenheit' is its other name: the condition of having been thrown, cast into a world not of my making: though mine to appropriate and assimilate, freely, yet within the inescapable limits of contingency.

2. This act of appropriation, of making my world mine, constitutes the second of the three inseparable characteristics of human being: *ex-*

istentiality. If 'facticity' is a personal concept, 'existentiality' is even more directly so. The term refers, again, not to existence in the sense in which sticks and stones exist, but to the inner personal existence for the designation of which it has become, through Kierkegaard, a quasi-technical term. Human being exists as anticipation of its own possibilities: exists in advance of itself, grasps its situation as challenge to its own power of becoming what it may, rather than being what it must be.¹ In Heidegger's words:

Dasein ist nicht ein Vorhandenes, das als Zugabe noch besitzt, etwas zu können, sondern es ist primär Möglichkeit.²

Human being is not a thing which has additionally the gift of being able to do something, but it is primarily possibility.

It is this aspect of human being which Heidegger later calls transcendence (*Transzendenz*): a better name for it, since it carries with it the meaning of anticipation, of going beyond the given.³ This is really what Heidegger's 'existentiality' means. Human being is always reaching out beyond itself: its very being consists in aiming at what it is not

¹ Kierkegaard used 'Existenz' primarily to refer to the *actuality* of my inner conscious being as against the vast and unreal 'possibilities' of Hegelian logic. To tie the meaning of 'Existenz' as automatically and completely to 'possibility' as Heidegger does, in a way falsifies Kierkegaard's concept.

² *S.u.Z.*, p. 143.

³ 'Transzendenz' in Heidegger always refers to this human reaching out to its own possibilities—not, like Jaspers' "Transzendenz," to God.

yet. In its very givenness there is the striving towards its own possibility of achievement: in its necessity, freedom.

Yet such projection (Entwurf) of itself never out-runs the boundaries of the world it has been given. It is projection in and of and with the world. Existentiality is the anticipation of human being by itself, and therewith of its world: it is understanding (Verstehen) of the world. Once more, self and world are inseparable:

Das Dasein ist als wesenshaft verstehendes zunächst beim Verstandenen.¹

Human being as essentially understanding is *with* the things it understands.

This, again, cuts across the traditional dichotomy of subject and object, sense and things. Even in perception we are actively reaching out to the things perceived:

Zunächst hören wir nie und nimmer Geräusche und Lautkomplexe, sondern den knarrenden Wagen, das Motorrad. Man hört die Kolonne auf dem Marsch, den Nordwind, den klopfenden Specht, das knisternde Feuer.²

What we hear in the first instance is never noises and sound-complexes, but the creaking wagon, the motorcycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the tapping woodpecker, the crackling fire.

3. In its own self-projection and self-transcendence, then, human being at once understands

¹ *S.u.Z.*, p. 164.

² *ibid.*, p. 163.

its world and becomes itself. Yet if the world is material for our creative energy, it is also the agent by which we are seduced from the essential drive to understand and to create. Human being is not only *in* the world, not only shapes its world, but in this creative endeavour becomes forfeit to the world. *Forfeiture* (*Verfallensein*), the third fundamental attribute of human being, means 'ontologically' that we forget 'Being' for particular beings. Humanly, it means the scattering of the essential forward drive through attention to the distracting and disturbing cares of everyday. This is not an occasional self-betrayal, a lapse now and then to a lower morality, but an omnipresent and inescapable aspect of human being. For there is no individual, however concentrated and devoted to one single aim, who is not bound just as essentially to the inessential. It is essential to human being to understand itself in its world; this understanding is dissipated in curiosity and gossip. It is essential to human being to look forward in concern for its own total development; this central drive is at the mercy of the mood of the moment. One is gay or sorrowful, amused or bored. No one can live in sole concentration on the resolve to become himself.

So, inevitably and continuously, the forward driving 'I' is sacrificed to the persistent and pressing 'they'. To the question, 'Who is human being?' (*die Frage nach dem Wer des Daseins*) we must answer: the indifferent and anonymous crowd, 'das Man'. Human being in its everyday

mode is promiscuously public; it is life with others (Mitsein, Mitdasein), for others (Fürsorge). Not only the particular things in my world: the joint to be roasted, the car to be greased, the bills to be paid, but the particular people too concerned with these things: my family who eat the joint, the butcher who provides it, the mechanic who services the car, the salesman who sold it—all these weave round my life, as I around theirs, a net of distraction and betrayal. Though my existence is my own, from my birth to my death, nothing in its humdrum course is truly, properly, authentically, exclusively mine: it is yours, theirs, anybody's.

.

These three, then: facticity: being-always-already-in-a-world; existentiality: being always in advance of itself in essential relation to its own possibilities; forfeiture: distraction by the insistent claims of everyday moods and everyday interests and everyday companions, are the essential aspects of human being. But the three aspects are not separable. They form, as we have seen, one unified structure. It is to this single, indissoluble nature that Heidegger gives the name *Sorge, cura*, concern or care.¹

This was not, I think, a fortunate name to choose. The Latin fable Heidegger quotes to justify it is not especially striking. This is the story of Care, who, crossing a river, picked up a piece of earth and formed it in the shape of a man, to which

¹ *S.u.Ž.*, p. 192.

then Jupiter gave breath, and named it Homo for humus, of which it was made, and entrusted it to Care for all its days.¹ It is a dull tale, and comes as an anticlimax after the heavily thundering argument by which Heidegger has led up to it. One wonders too why Jupiter's essential contribution receives no further mention.

If we overlook the name, however, the central conception in this preliminary analysis is important: namely, the double tension which it describes as constituting human being. Man is determined yet free, free yet enslaved. If I am here, now, what heredity and environment have made me, so are these, conversely, what *I* make of them. But that is not all: this driving, integral, all-essential I is hidden, almost all my life, by the daily round, the daily crises, the daily moods, which could not add up to an I, to a life, to a person, unless they were somehow bound to the centre they circumnavigate, unless they expressed somehow the very being they betray. Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant all have described man as bound yet free. But it is the double nature of this bondage which Heidegger has shown us. Freedom lives in the tension of history, in the challenge of my situation, my body, my family, my city, my country. But freedom lives equally in the tension of the unhistorical, the purely present: the passing mood, the gossiping neighbour, the chores of office or kitchen, the escape of travel or television: the flight of the self from itself.

¹ *S.u.Z.*, p. 197-8.

It is the self in flight from itself, the forfeited self, which is the starting point and principal theme of the preparatory analysis. The second part seeks to single out an authentic being against the scattering of everyday existence. It is here that Heidegger develops his concept of time: existential or historical time: time as the span of my life, rather than the indefinitely stretching medium measurable by clocks or planetary motions.

'Human being and temporality' ('Dasein und Zeitlichkeit'), accordingly, is the name of this part; and the reconsideration of human being in its temporal nature which is here undertaken is supposed to deepen and carry forward our ontological insight. It is rather hard, at first, to see just how this is done. For one thing, the addition of time to Being does not seem, on the face of it, to add so very much to the preparatory analysis. It is obvious that the three aspects of human being already discussed *are* in some sense the three dimensions of our temporality. Facticity is contingent determination from the past; existentiality, anticipation of the future; forfeiture, distraction in the present. Moreover, the constant multiplication of apparently major concepts in both parts of the work makes it very difficult to single out a few ideas or lines of argument and say: this is what it is all about. Every second sentence seems to announce a new concept or set of concepts; yet they are all so closely interdependent, that it is difficult to see how

they differ from one another. The text reads like a series of blows with a sledge-hammer. Each blow says, *now* the post is driven home—and the next and the next and the next hammer the same post with the same vigour and definiteness—only to be succeeded by still another.

Yet there *is* a progression in the argument; and it is a progression which leads to a new conception of time and of history; or of life-span and individual history. I shall try to explain this by focusing on three concepts developed in the second part of the book. These are *dread*, *conscience* and *destiny* (Angst, Gewissen, Schicksal).

First, dread. We have seen that human being is distracted in the petty concerns of everyday. The question arises: is there any emergence from forfeiture? If the self is in flight from itself, can it in any way turn back to itself, face its own being with honesty and directness? And this, as Heidegger puts it, is equivalent to the question: is there any wholeness of human being—any way to grasp it entirely rather than in stray and scattered bits?

The answer is found by looking at the moods, the states of mind (Befindlichkeiten) which mark the momentary condition of the individual. There *is* one mood which is unique: which does recall human being from self-betrayal to self-knowledge; and that mood is dread. Other moods and passions have everyday objects *in* the world: fear of pain or violence, love of friend or child or lover, ambition for power and commendation. Dread has no such namable, isolated object. It is a sense of the loss of

objects, of nothingness—a sense of nothingness which lays hold of me when I face, not this or that thing or person, but the whole structure of being-in-the-world itself.

But why, when all the things and people are there and solid and comfortably real, should their totality, when I face it, fill me with dread, with a sense, not of the full, rich reality of my world, but of its nothingness? The answer is simple. When I see my life, which is my world, in its entirety, I see its ending. Dread is of life as a whole: that is, of death as end and ground and boundary of life. For life in its entirety is *life facing death*. Dread and dread only of all moods and passions brings this knowledge, lifts human being out of its scurrying self-forgetfulness to the vision of its wholeness: to the knowledge of itself as ‘das Sein zum Tode’, being-to-death. Dread and dread only, likewise, of all moods and passions, brings to human being its proper freedom, liberates from the bonds of forfeiture, transforms the alien absurdities of stubborn fact into its essential possibility of being itself: of being itself, in Heidegger’s words, ‘set free from the illusions of the “they”’, in passionate, self-assured, anxious freedom to death’ (‘in der leidenschaftlichen, von den Illusionen des Man gelösten, faktischen, ihrer selbst gewissen und sich ängstenden Freiheit zum Tode’.¹)

Human being, then, in its totality, in its authentic being, is Being-to-death. This is a strange conclusion. Heidegger has reached it, not simply by

¹ *S.u.Z.*, p. 266.

looking at dread as a uniquely revealing mood, but by an abstract argument, by discovering Being-to-death as, in his words, an 'ontological possibility' (ontologische Möglichkeit). There are two sides to this argument, which must be distinguished at this stage. First, if human being is to be a unity, it can be so only as a whole, i.e. in relation to its ending, to death. Second, if human being is to rise from forfeiture to authenticity (Eigentlichkeit), it can do so only in isolation from the seductive and distracting 'they'; and only death, or the relation to death, brings such isolation. For my death is the only event in my life, Heidegger says, which is absolutely, uniquely mine. (It is 'eigentlich', authentic, because it is 'eigen', my own.)

Both these arguments lead, so far, to the same conclusion. But now there arises the question, whether any phenomenon in human existence actually realizes this possibility: whether this 'ontological' conclusion is fulfilled in fact. Heidegger's answer is: there is such a phenomenon, namely, conscience. This is, again, a strange answer. It might be said, for one thing, that the question was unnecessary. Dread has already been exhibited as an actually occurring condition which reveals the essential relation of human being to its own annihilation, its own nothingness. However, though dread is the mood in which human being is open to the voice of conscience, conscience itself, I presume, Heidegger would consider to be the fuller structure which is expressed in and through dread.

But in that case conscience and the dread of

death are somehow at one; and this seems a more serious stumbling-block. For what has conscience to do with death and the dread of death? True, the most dramatic performances of conscience often occur in the face of death; and the sanctions of death and hellfire are traditionally used to support 'morality'. But that the voice of conscience in itself somehow evokes death or the relation to death, the projection toward death, is a very puzzling notion. The task of conscience, surely, is to prescribe for us the substantive duties of our lives. Honesty, loyalty, tolerance: what have these to do with death?

Here, however, we must separate the two strands in the argument. Heidegger is looking for a totality of human being, *and* for an authentic condition of human being as distinct from forfeiture. The conception of 'Being-to-death' is presented as resolution to both these problems. The conception of conscience, however, is not introduced as directly connected with this formula, but with one branch of the argument only. It is the voice of conscience which calls human being out of the uneasiness of forfeiture to its own authentic capacity to be itself, calls it to choose itself. The relation of this self-choice to death and dread will appear when we consider how the activity of conscience, the resolution taken at the demand of conscience, creates for human being its destiny.

Meanwhile let us look at Heidegger's account of conscience. Conscience exemplifies in its occurrence all three aspects of human being. It is the voice by which, speaking in the mode of secrecy

and silence, human being calls itself out of the distraction of self-forgetfulness, out of absorption in the 'they', to the lonely avowal of its own responsibility for being itself. Thus conscience is the call of the self to itself, out of forfeiture to authenticity. Such an avowal, however, takes place only by the acknowledgement that this self which I ought to become is *given* me: that I am thrown into a world not of my choosing, and that precisely this contingent character of my situation *is*, despite myself, the self I have the task of choosing. Thus in conscience the self bids itself transcend the facticity which it yet inalienably is.

The phenomenon of conscience, in other words, reveals once more the double tension which appeared earlier to be characteristic of human being. It challenges human being to escape from enslavement into freedom, and by the same act to transform historical necessity into resolution (*Entschlossenheit*). This tension is on each side a lack. I never escape forfeiture; facticity is inalienably the alien ground of my existence. And it is on each side equally an obligation. Conscience tells me I *ought* to face resolutely my own inner capability instead of forgetting myself in this and that. I *ought* to make my situation vitally mine rather than let it inflict itself upon me. But despite—or in—this 'ought', the lack persists: the self owes to itself a debt it cannot discharge. Short, even, of the total nothingness experienced in the dread of death, human being in its very life is *not*—not what it made itself, not what it strives to be, not what it ought to

be. And yet the very recognition of this debt, of this *not*, is its resolve to become itself.¹ For in recognizing itself as essentially in debt it knows itself, not in triviality and distraction, but in its inmost capability (in seinem eigensten Seinkönnen).² It knows itself as guilty—for the German ‘Schuld’ carries what are for us two meanings: debt or obligation in the legal sense, and the full stigmatizing sense of guilt. It is in this fuller sense that human being is, ‘in the ground of its being, guilty’ (‘im Grunde seines Seins schuldig’).³

Human being, then, in response to conscience, knows its own obligation to return to itself from distraction in the ‘they’, knows itself as guilty: ‘Der . . . ruf des Gewissens gibt dem Dasein zu verstehen, dass es . . . aus der Verlorenheit in das Man sich zu ihm selbst zurückholen soll, d.h. *schuldig ist*.’⁴ This assertion has, Heidegger insists, nothing to do, one way or another, with the theological concept of sin. It is the outcome of a purely phenomenological analysis of human being as such. Of course it is this character of personal existence that is treated theologically in the story of fall and redemption. But what is significant here is

¹ *S.u.Ζ.*, p. 285: ‘Die Sorge—das Sein des Daseins—besagt demnach als geworfener Entwurf: das (nichtige) Grund-sein einer Nichtigkeit.’

² *ibid.*, p. 287.

³ *ibid.*, p. 286.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 287. The full sentence summarizes the argument I have been reporting: ‘Der vorrufende Rückruf des Gewissens gibt dem Dasein zu verstehen, dass es—nichtiger grund seines nichtigen Entwurfs in der Möglichkeit seines Seins stehend—aus der Verlorenheit in das Man sich zu ihm selbst zurückholen soll, d.h. *schuldig ist*.’

precisely that *without* the support of theology, without the support, even, of a substantive traditional ethic, it is as the awareness of its own essential debt to itself, of its guilt, that human being emerges in its authenticity. This the psychology of the empirical tradition is unable to admit. Mind viewed on a mechanical model is happy or miserable, not guilty or innocent. Guilt is merely a misery and must be removed. But to remove guilt altogether—if one could—would be, from the existential point of view, to relax the tension which *is* humanity—the tension between the form of life aimed at and its imperfect embodiment.

This sounds like another version of the tired old truism about the disparity of ideal and real. But truisms are sometimes true. If one could take the least common denominator of Plato's doctrine of participation, the Christian dogma of the Fall, Spinoza's conception of inadequate ideas, and Kant's view of the relation in man between phenomenal and noumenal, the truth common to all these is expressed once more in Heidegger's conception of conscience and guilt. It is a narrow and perverse expression, if you like, since it makes responsibility entirely a relation to myself and not to others. Yet it provides an important corrective to the widespread and erroneous belief that guilt can be removed and active, adult responsibility remain. Responsibility is grounded in guilt, at least in the minimal sense of want or debt, of an 'ought' aimed at but never achieved.

Conscience, then, calls human being out of

uneasy self-loss in the 'they' to the single, self-concentrated resolve to choose itself; and this choice follows on, or even consists in, the recognition of its own debt to itself. This is how human being becomes authentic. It remains to recover the other thread of the argument: to see how human being becomes a whole. This it does, Heidegger has said, in relation to its ending; it is through this relation, finally, that the meaning and structure of existential time emerge, and that human being is found to be primarily historical: to possess a destiny.

Time is generally thought of as proceeding out of an indefinitely stretching past into an indefinitely stretching future. Absolute Newtonian time is but a more precisely stated version of this 'common-sense' view; and the Leibnizian theory, which considers time not as a self-existent medium but as the relation between events, or between substances and their accidents, holds equally that such happenings go on forever in an unending chain, from past to future. Even Bergson's biological time, bearer of the *élan vital*, is a kind of drive pushing out of the past into an indefinite future. For Heidegger these are all derived and abstract forms of time. Primary, personal, existential time is different.

In the first place, it is not just time, but *my* time. It is the span of my life. Time in this sense is the 'ontological' ground of human being: ¹ this is what

¹ *S.u.Ζ.*, p. 326: 'Zeitlichkeit enthüllt sich als der Sinn der eigentlichen Sorge.'

human being most truly and deeply *is*. In the second place, the basic tense of existential time is future.¹ It moves not from past through present to future, but out of the future through the past to the present. Reaching out to the future it turns back to assimilate the past which has made the present. In the third place, it is finite. My time will be finished. If I face the future, *that* is the ultimate future I have to face. So time future must be time finite: human being, as time, is being to death. But there is still another point. Personal time is finite in two directions. If it will end, it also had a beginning. In looking forward to its end, in seeing as an entirety the span of its life, human being assumes also an essential relation, a relation of understanding and assimilation, to its beginning. Turning back from the anticipation of its own non-being, from the face of death, it faces also freely, as its own, the history that has been given it by its beginning: given it not *by* its own responsibility, but nevertheless *for* its own responsibility.

True responsibility is grounded in the structure of personal time. Once we see human being as time, we see conscience also, the voice which calls human being to its freedom, as rooted in time and the finitude of time: in Being-to-death. And guilt also, the burden which conscience shows human being it must bear, has the same root: it is the sense of the discrepancy between the given past, and the whole I ought to but never can create of it.

¹ *S.u.Z.*, p. 329: 'Das primäre Phänomen der ursprünglichen und eigentlichen Zeitlichkeit ist die Zukunft.'

What has all this to do with destiny? It is in the context of this relation to future and to past, to death and birth, that the present itself is raised out of forfeiture to an authentic present, which is my destiny: to play freely, in my time, and for my time, the role into which, by no choice of mine, I have been cast—to play for no audience and no applause, but solely for the sake of the performance itself which I am—and beyond which I am nothing. Destiny is possible, Heidegger says, only when

im Sein eines Seienden Tod, Schuld, Gewissen,
Freiheit und Endlichkeit . . . gleichursprünglich
zusammenwohnen.¹

in the Being of a being death, guilt, conscience,
freedom and finitude dwell together at its very source.

Only such a being is 'eigentlich geschichtlich': properly historical. Only such a being has authentically and honestly faced its proper future, has by so doing absorbed authentically into itself its proper past, and has thus set itself free to live, authentically, in its proper present, 'for its time'. Only such a being has a destiny. Or, in the German of which the above is a paraphrase:

Nur Seiendes, das wesenhaft in seinem Sein *zukünftig* ist, so dass es frei für seinen Tod an ihm zerschellend auf sein faktisches Da sich zurückwerfen lassen kann, d.h. nur Seiendes, das als zukünftiges gleichursprünglich *gewesend* ist, kann, sich selbst die ererbte Möglichkeit überliefernd, die eigene Geworfenheit übernehmen und

¹ *S.u.Ζ.*, p. 385.

augenblicklich sein für 'seine Zeit.' Nur eigentliche Zeitlichkeit, die zugleich endlich ist, macht so etwas wie Schicksal, d.h. eigentliche Geschichtlichkeit möglich.¹

Destiny, then, like conscience, is centred in and created by the individual. Conscience calls the self to resolve to become itself; so resolved, it achieves its destiny. 'A powerless super-power' (eine ohnmächtige Übermacht) Heidegger calls it :¹ the power of human being to submit to the play of chance, not out of mere helplessness, but out of the resolve to make its facticity wholly and radically its own. Not every one has a destiny. He who has not heard the voice of conscience, who has not achieved the steady condition of resolve, is buffeted by chance and circumstance as much as, or more than, the man of resolution; but this is no destiny. Destiny is a mode of authentic, not forfeited existence. It is not the portion meted out to each of us by the Fates who spin and measure and cut for all alike. It is a pattern achieved only by the rare individual who in dread and silence has come face to face with his own nothingness and has shaped his life in the light, or the darkness, of that encounter.

To live in the mode of destiny, Heidegger says, is to live historically. Destiny is synonymous with what he calls 'proper historicity' (eigentliche Geschichtlichkeit). But surely when we come to history, we have passed beyond the horizon of the single, death-dreading individual. And Heidegger

¹ *loc. cit.*

does distinguish between *Schicksal*, individual destiny, and *Geschick*, a collective destiny of some sort: 'by which we understand the story of human being in togetherness with others' ('worunter wir das Geschehen des Daseins im Mitsein mit Anderen verstehen').¹ Yet he does nothing, so far as I can see, with the latter concept. Any substantive conception of the rootedness of the single person among and along with his contemporaries is quite wanting.

Thus it is difficult to see much direct bearing of Heidegger's 'destiny' on the work of historians. He deals, for example, with Nietzsche's essay on history only in order to show that the three types of history elaborated by Nietzsche are 'anticipated in the historicity of human being':

Die Dreifachheit der Historie ist in der Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins vorgezeichnet.²

Monumental history is directed to the future; antiquarian history to the past; critical history to the present. The structure of the whole complex lies in the character of human being as time:

Der Grund des Fundaments der eigentlichen Historie aber ist die *Zeitlichkeit* als der existenziale Seinsinn der Sorge.³

But the ground of the foundation of authentic history is personal time as the existential sense of the being of Care.

¹ *S.u.Z.*, p. 386.

² *ibid.*, p. 396.

³ *ibid.*, p. 397. For a detailed and most illuminating critique of Heidegger's concept of history, see K. Löwith, *Heidegger: Denker in dürftiger Zeit*, Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 1953, Ch. II; also for Heidegger on Nietzsche, *ibid.*, Ch. III.

Even the discussion of the historiographical theory of Dilthey and Yorck as against Ranke takes us little further, although Heidegger assures us that it was their vision which his whole 'preparatory existential-temporal analysis of human being was resolved to subserve'.¹ One can see, admittedly, what he meant by this statement through the ontological-historical arguments of his later work; but in *Sein und Zeit* it is first and last the single person's history, the individual's life-span, which takes the centre of the stage. In this context the reference to history in the general sense, the history of nations through centuries, falls flat. Certainly, history is concerned with life, not with any abstract system: in Yorck's terms, the 'historic' must be distinguished from the 'ontic'. And certainly, history is grounded in the apprehension of individuals, who alone live. But history can hardly be concerned exclusively or even primarily with the existentialist's authentic person in his silent, solitary, resolute freedom to death. True, the authentic person, in facing and creating his destiny, makes his inheritance, makes tradition his own. History becomes *his* history. Yet the emphasis, the living centre of the whole picture, lies not in the broader historical horizon, but in this very act of assimilation, in the death-facing, birth-absorbing, destiny-making resolve by which human being rises, in isolation from the gossiping crowd, to its proper stature, and in which it finds itself, in the face of its dissolution, unutterably and irremediably alone.

¹ *S.u.Z.*, p. 404.

III

Heidegger malgré lui

Das alles war Auftrag.
Aber bewältigtest Du's?

All this was a trust.
But were you equal to it?

R. M. Rilke

I

The dominant theme of *Sein und Zeit*, we have concluded, is the vision of the lonely will driven by dread to face in prospect its own dissolution, in retrospect its guilt, and yet to realize in this twin terror its proper freedom. This was, as Pfeiffer has pointed out, Tolstoi's theme in 'The Death of Ivan Ilyitch':

How a man, cut off from every excuse in the face of the death that inescapably confronts him, must tear himself loose from the seductive consolations which we all know (not yet, not for a long while yet, some other time, some one else, not you); how he is hurled down into the depths of his being and finds no rest till he has worked through his groundless life to its very foundation, where the comfortless dark is at last illumined in sudden liberation.¹

It may well be asked how this imaginative, yet restricted theme can provide the central conception

¹ Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

for a serious philosophical movement. What is the contribution of *Sein und Zeit* to philosophy?

It is clear, first, that, as has been said very often, Heidegger was stressing in *Sein und Zeit* an aspect of human nature which seems to have particular poignancy and importance for our time. It was the paradox of responsibility with which he was dealing, and with which we have all to deal.

True, his central conception, 'Being-to-death', has not been accepted even by other existentialist writers. Sartre insists that it is the absurdity of freedom itself, not death, to which the existential resolve is essentially related. Yet Sartre himself has described how 'Being to death' came dramatically and terribly to life in the Resistance:

Exile, captivity and especially death (which we usually shrink from facing at all in happier times) became for us the habitual objects of our concern. We learned that they were neither inevitable accidents, nor even constant and exterior dangers, but that they must be considered as our lot itself, our destiny, the profound source of our reality as men. . . . Thus the basic question of liberty was posed, and we were brought to the verge of the deepest knowledge that man can have of himself. For the secret of a man is not his Oedipus complex or his inferiority complex: it is the limit of his liberty, his capacity for resisting torture and death.¹

¹ J. P. Sartre, 'The Republic of Silence', in *The Republic of Silence*, ed. A. J. Liebling, New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1947, p. 498 ff.

To have given abstract formulation to this 'basic question of liberty' is undoubtedly a signal service of *Sein und Zeit* to contemporary thought. For this was not only a phenomenon of the times of terror which Heidegger had forecast—as Heine forecast the political issue of German idealism. Apart from its intensification at certain moments of national or personal history, the awareness of death, however submerged and forgotten, is a significant factor in any conscious life. Yet this is, so far as I know, the first time since Plato that death has been given central philosophic significance in the interpretation of life. In the case of Lucretius, for example, the fear of death, and in that of Hobbes the fear of violent death, are hinges, so to speak, on which their philosophic systems are hung; but they are not, like Heidegger's 'resolve to death', internal to the analysis of life itself.

Whatever philosophers wish to do hereafter with this concept, they ought certainly to reckon with it. If the truth about human nature is revealed in relation to what Jaspers called 'Grenzsituationen', boundary-situations, my death is the most dramatic—more than that, the essential and determining boundary situation. If, as Sartre prefers to stress, it is terrible that I am responsible for what I have become, it is always hopeful to reflect that tomorrow I may do better. But what is most terrible is that I cannot do so forever, that in fact if I have bungled and cheated and generally made a fool of myself, there is only a little while, perhaps not all of today even, in which to do it all over. Kierke-

gaard's favourite maxim: 'over 70,000 fathoms, miles and miles from all human help, to be glad' is the core of existentialism. It is this that Heidegger, in the tortuous yet decisive argument of *Sein und Zeit*, challenges us to face. And, deprived of Kierkegaard's faith, we are compelled even more urgently to face it. For to the individual denied supernatural support, cast alone into his world, the dread of death is a haunting if suppressed theme that runs through life. What is more, if at all times communication between men is tattered and fragile, it is in the face of death that each man stands most strikingly and irrevocably alone. For this Everyman there is after all no guide in his most need to go by his side; more intensely than for his medieval counterpart, his relation to death marks as nothing else does the integrity and independence of his life.

The concept of Being-to-death, moreover, is part of a broader ethical theme which—once more in despite of its author's ontological purpose—constitutes a major philosophical contribution of this work. For through the isolation of the individual in Heidegger's analysis we can come to see clearly the ethical importance of the concept of personal integrity or authenticity—which others often blur by emphasis on the effects or even the intentions of actions as criteria of their moral worth. True, *Sein und Zeit* is very far from providing an adequate basis for ethics: the devil himself, if he were mortal, might exhibit the resolute self-possession Heidegger admires. But Heidegger does express, in a temper

better suited to our generation than the puritan austerity of Kant, what is essentially the Kantian thesis: namely, that moral worth resides primarily, not in the consequences of actions, but in the integrity and purity of the will that performs them.

By this emphasis Heidegger, and through him existentialist ethics, has given to the admirable a new location, and hence by implication has re-located judgements of moral value. For ethics, as Peirce said, depends finally on aesthetics, i.e. judgements of ought depend on the delineation of an ideal, of what is admirable and what is not. And what the existentialist admires is not the happiness of a man's life, the goodness of his disposition, or the rightness of his acts, but the authenticity of his existence. This is the unique contribution of existentialism to ethical theory. There are, of course, other ethical principles involved in existential philosophy, but they are principles which it has in common with other ethical systems. For example, the existentialist denies the universality of moral values, he asserts the all-importance, ethically, of the historic individual in his unique situation—these tenets the existentialist shares with numerous other moralists, past and present. Also the emphasis on responsibility as such, the existentialist shares with other—notably Kantian—thinkers. All these are tenets which will appear obvious truths to those who believe them; and obvious falsehoods to those who disbelieve them; in either event they are not unique. But the stress on authen-

ticity puts the traditional concept of responsibility in a new light. This is a unique existentialist emphasis—and an important one.

The concept of authenticity is rooted in the existential interpretation of freedom, which itself significantly transforms the traditional conception: for it makes of freedom a venture as well as a fact. We live from birth to death under the compulsion of brute fact; yet out of the mere givenness of situation it is we ourselves who shape ourselves and our world. And in this shaping we succeed or fail. To succeed is not to escape compulsion but to transcend it—to give it significance and meaning by our own projection of the absurdly given past into a directed future. But such shaping of contingency, such imposition of meaning on the meaningless, is possible only through the very recognition of meaninglessness—of the nothingness that underlies our lives. Thus authenticity is a kind of honesty or a kind of courage; the authentic individual faces something which the inauthentic individual is afraid to face.

And if, in authentic existence, freedom can inform necessity and give meaning to the meaningless, it may also fail in its transcendence, it may succumb to the multiplicity and absurdity of fact, it may seek escape in the fiction of a supporting cosmic morality or in the domination of a blind passion or in the nagging distraction of its everyday concerns. In other words, freedom is not an abstraction to be generically applied to 'man' as such, but a risk, a venture, a demand. In a sense we are

all free, but we are free to achieve our freedom or to lose it. There are no natural slaves, but most of us have enslaved ourselves. Existentialism is, in this, a kind of inverse Spinozism. Like Spinoza, it sees man as bound *or* free; only, unlike Spinoza, it finds in reason not a liberator but one of the possible enslavers, and in a certain kind of imagination the source not of enslavement but of emancipation from it.

It should be noticed, however, that in Heidegger's conception the sphere of the inauthentic, of forfeiture, is always with us. There is no easy distinction, such as Sartre seems to want to make, between those who, leaving the fraudulent behind them, achieve the level of genuine existence, and those who do not. We are all, always, a prey to the cares of here and now; of a thousand and one trivialities all our days are made. Yet there is an essential, qualitative, recognizable difference, a total difference, morally, in the existence for which the manifold of experience is transcended in a unity, not, like the Kantian, abstract and universal, but intensely personal and concrete. Again, there is here an ethical insight of which moralists would do well to take account.

Finally, the theme of *Sein und Zeit*, of the lonely will rising through dread and guilt to self-assertion and self-reliance, has implications as important for the interpretation of knowledge as of conduct. If conscience and resolve are fundamental and pervasive concepts for the analysis of human being, they apply *a fortiori* to its intellectual strivings.

Knowledge can be described as valid only if it is described as a projection, in the existential sense: a venture of the self through which it transforms itself. This is especially clear with respect to philosophy itself. Every philosophy which sets out to explain human knowledge must explain likewise its knowledge of this knowledge. Hume, who stated once for all the principles of empiricism, recognized this need; and his *Treatise* is explicitly self-validating in the sense that all knowledge is said to be merely associative and habitual, including his own knowledge of knowledge. This one may call a principle of *mechanical* circularity; strictly speaking, it *invalidates* all knowledge, including the philosopher's. Heidegger's method, on the other hand, exhibits what one may call a principle of *moral* circularity. Human being, which is actively and responsibly striving to understand its world and so to become itself, transforms itself by the very act of philosophizing, and thus responsibly accepts its own interpretation of human being, including itself. Heidegger also, in dealing with the possible objection that his argument is circular, makes this relation explicit:

Die Rede vom 'Zirkel' des Verstehens ist der Ausdruck einer doppelten Verkennung: 1. Dass Verstehen selbst eine Grundart des Seins des Daseins ausmacht. 2. Dass dieses Sein als Sorge konstituiert ist. Den Zirkel leugnen, ihn verheimlichen oder gar überwinden wollen, heisst, diese Verkennung endgültig verfestigen. Die

Bemühung muss vielmehr darauf zielen ursprünglich und ganz in diesen "Kreis" zu springen, um sich schon im Ansatz der Daseinsanalyse den vollen Blick auf das zirkelhafte Sein des Daseins zu sichern.¹

The talk of the 'circle' of understanding is the expression of a failure to recognize two things: 1. That understanding itself constitutes a basic mode of Being of human being. 2. That this Being has the structure of Care. To deny the circle, to conceal it, or even to wish to overcome it, means to hold tight to this failure for good and all. Our efforts must be aimed rather at leaping radically and wholly into this 'circle', in order, by means of the analysis of human being, to assure a full view of the circular Being of human being.

There is always the risk, of course, that this self-asserted circularity may turn out to be viciously circular. It may in particular, as Löwith suggests, furnish an excuse for specious interpretation of the thought of others.² For the philosopher is always only altering himself, and so understanding himself: this follows necessarily from Heidegger's conception of understanding as identical with 'Entwurf' (projection) or existentiality. It is my own possibilities which I develop by understanding. I

¹ *S.u.Z.*, p. 315. This circle-structure holds of all knowledge, not only of the immediately and obviously reflective understanding of the philosopher. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 153: 'Mathematik ist nicht strenger als Historie, sondern nur enger hinsichtlich des Umkreises der für sie relevanten existentialen Fundamente'. 'Mathematics is not stricter than history, but only narrower with respect to the circumference of the existential foundations relevant to it.' In all knowing as 'Verstehen', in other words, the circle-structure is the same.

² Löwith, *op. cit.*, pp. 77 ff.

never move outside the circle of my own thoughts. If I am always 'with' the world, it is *my* world, focused on myself as centre. This seems the very antithesis of the state of mind essential to understanding other thinkers' thoughts, or to any kind of historical understanding, which consists precisely in feeling one's way into some one else's world, not my own. And it is true, as we shall see, that an extreme egocentricity vitiates most of Heidegger's exegesis of texts. Yet it is usually the ontological rather than the existential aspect of his thought which is used to justify his violent critical procedure: he alone understands Being, or is seriously asking for Being. Being itself demands this ruthless rejection of conventional philology, etc.

Moreover, if the existential circle runs, as it does, the risk of false subjectivity, that is again a risk essential to the nature of human being itself. There is no knowing without the risk of error. It is precisely the empiricist's desire to avoid risk that makes him unable to validate any knowledge, his own included. He will not step in and assent to it. Yet without some such self-hazarding, and at the same time self-confirming circle, philosophical reflection on the nature of knowing is impossible: it contradicts itself at its very source.

2

The analysis of personal existence, then, brings forth fruitful and important consequences. But at the same time the emphasis on the single isolated person is disastrously limiting. Even the emphasis

on death, in the fashion in which Heidegger presents it, involves an inescapable narrowness which warps the total conception of the authentic individual. *Only* a man's death, Heidegger says, is irreplaceably his own, is not interchangeable with the experience of others; and therefore it is only in 'Being-to-death' that he escapes the claims of the public and corrupting 'they' and is genuinely himself, genuinely free. His 'freedom to death', the confrontation with this one fact which is really his own, is the whole content and meaning of his freedom, and the existence of other selves as of the world is for him only a means to the achievement of this grim and lonely triumph. But this is not only emancipation from the bewildering distraction of the anonymous 'they'; it is emancipation from all that might, by our own creation, be made meaningful. It is indeed a transcendence of the meaningless manifold, but a transcendence too dearly bought, for the very oneness and intensity of the achievement make it itself almost empty of meaning. This is again the *Nullpunktexistenz* of Kierkegaard, from which even God himself has vanished. Personal authenticity is a significant ethical concept, and the relation of the individual to death is an essential aspect of it, but it is not an aspect that can stand alone as Heidegger makes it do.

The same criticism applies to Heidegger's conception of responsibility. If it is important to recognize, both ethically and intellectually, the role of responsibility in human life, to recall,

against the levelling mechanisms of 'scientific' psychology, the essential human function of conscience and guilt, the responsibility described in *Sein und Zeit* is not adequate to this role—for it is empty. It is not, in the last analysis, responsibility for anything or in any setting beyond the given situation of the individual himself. Human being facing its own non-being alone and in dread is human being emptied of substance. The trouble is that a truly resolved authentic existent, as the existentialist conceives him, has no end given him *except* his own authenticity. But surely authenticity is not so much an end of acts as a value which is realized as a by-product of acts. The failure to recognize this essential complexity of the ethical situation is a serious lack of existentialism, as it is of many systematic moralities (or philosophical systems entailing moralities). Moralists seek to describe *the* end of human action; but many values, and perhaps the highest, are produced, as Nicolai Hartmann put it, 'on the back of the act'. The self-consciousness involved in seeking them makes them impossible to find. Authenticity is such a value. Those who attain it are doing and seeking what others are doing and seeking; the unique and in a sense timeless value their life exhibits is a quality of, not an end for, that life itself.

Moreover, this lack of complexity reflects a deeper lack; for the central difficulty which underlies all the errors and omissions of existentialism is the narrowness of the existential view of the free act. The existentialist has rightly seen that,

'thrown into the world', always already 'engaged', we are nevertheless each totally responsible for our own destinies. But by singling out the act alone by which a man faces his own freedom, the existentialist isolates part of a total situation which cannot in fact be so isolated. It is true that it is 'I' who have always-already-chosen the values by which I live. But I have chosen, not created them; if they were not in some sense there to be chosen, if something did not compel me to choose them, they would not be values at all. I could not even, like Kirillov, choose suicide as the negation of all values. My choice is *my* choice, but it is also the choice *of* something—and of something that obliges me to choose it. This aspect of the value situation Heidegger, for all his talk of historicity and his quotations from Yorck and Dilthey, never really considers. In short, despite the differences between the existentialism of Heidegger and Sartre, the Sartrean hero tragically seeking his own act by the fantastic standard of a wholly in-turned and self-centred conscience seems truly the proper embodiment of Heidegger's 'resolve'. But the Sartrean hero never achieves his own act; he can only die absurdly, like Mathieu in the fall of France. And the reason for this failure is simply that there are no pure acts: acts which are aim and end and standard all in one. Every act involves at the least some reference to values which, beyond itself, make a claim on the agent and perhaps, at least indirectly, bind him to other agents or to those affected by his acts.

This brings us, further, to the all-too-familiar but necessary objection: that Heidegger's man of resolve is wanting in all sense of community with his fellow beings. *Mitdasein*, being-together, occurs only on the level of forfeiture. The authentic individual knows no friend or fellow. He alone, for the sake of his own integrity, faces his own death, alone. Yet surely authenticity involves not only the winning of my own freedom, but the respect for freedom, not only the achievement of dignity in the individual but the acceptance of the Kantian maxim of the dignity of all individuals. Some such connection does seem to exist. One cannot imagine an authentic individual who really has no respect for the liberty of others, and one cannot imagine the existence of authenticity where some sort of liberty does not exist, in idea if not in fact. But there has been, so far as I know, no convincing statement from the existentialists why this should be so. To take away substantive values as *mauvaise foi*, as Sartre does, and then to reinstate freedom as a substantive value is not good enough. But, on the other hand, like Heidegger, to view the existence of others only as a means to my freedom is worse than not good enough—it is positively evil. Yet it is difficult, in existential language, to say why.

This failure of existentialism—its failure adequately to relate my freedom to freedom in general—bears also on the more limited or more concrete problem which it equally fails to treat: that is, the problem of the manner in which authenticity is

determined or defined or influenced by the direct relation of one individual to another *in* his freedom. Both Jaspers and Marcel have introduced concepts of communication into existentialism, but in both cases the treatment is so vague and sentimental as to contribute little. Yet it is here, in the question of communication, as well as in the implications of the concept of authentic existence for the general concept of liberty, that more needs to be said.

Is it wholly in loneliness that authenticity is achieved? If genuine existence is transcendence successfully accomplished, giving form and meaning to the meaningless succession of hours and needs, does it not, in transcending contingency and nothingness, in some sense transcend loneliness as well? Is not—sometimes at least—the transcendence of loneliness needed for the very achievement of authenticity? True, authenticity itself, the core of genuine existence, is a value which must centre in the individual who bears it; the inner dissipation of the self in seeming devotion to other selves is, existentially speaking, deeply immoral. Even the ‘self-sacrifice’ of an authentic person perfects and dignifies the individual and inalienable person that is himself. Yet, if one can distinguish between a fraudulent and an authentic aspect of the self, may one not distinguish also between a fraudulent and an authentic relation between selves? The quality of the concern with others on the distractive level is evident in all gregariousness; its most extreme expression, perhaps, is the cozy friendliness of radio announcers to their dis-

embodied audience. But, in the projection toward one's own freedom which focuses forfeiture into authenticity, the bewildered and bewildering diffusion of everyday sociability would seem likewise to be, if not replaced, at least reoriented in the direction of a genuine and decisive reaching out to the few others whose existence shows a significant kinship to one's own. Even if authenticity is in an essential aspect 'Being-to-death', it is in that very aspect, in the light of the ultimate dissolution of the person loved or loving, that the urgency and reality of communication are most truly exhibited. In short, if the ultimate loneliness of each of us is not to be denied, still between the total egoism of Heidegger's authentic person and the routine togetherness of 'the lonely crowd', there seems to lie a broad range of kinds of, and endeavours at, communication—of times and places in which, fleetingly and in devious ways, perhaps, but still truly, minds do meet. Without the actuality and possibility of such meetings, the irrevocable loneliness of human life, however authentic, would be indeed too great to bear.

We may notice, finally, another aspect of existential loneliness which is not so often mentioned, but which constitutes just as serious a limitation in a philosophy that stresses the given, contingent, and, one would think, therefore natural aspect of human nature. Heidegger's man of resolve is cut off not only from men, but from beasts—from the whole of living nature. The personality of animals, the togetherness of men and animals, in work or

play, enter nowhere for a moment into Heidegger's account of human being. As each man is alone against the world and his fellows, so man, as the being who seeks Being, is cut off from kinship with the vast hierarchy of species who—so far as we can tell—enter on no such search. The panorama of nature, the visible continuity of life, which seems the first datum for any philosophy not forbidden by theological dogma to consider it, is never for a moment thought of. In fact, so far as I have read them, this complete concentration on the human person is markedly characteristic of all existential writers. It is a doubly self-centred philosophy: a philosophy of the individual centred in his own responsibility to become himself, of man in his own unique relation to his own Being. It is a philosophy in which the concept of the person is all-important, yet it can give us no account of any reaching out from one person to another. It is a philosophy for which birth and life and death are all-important; yet it admits no kinship between man and any of the other things that are born and live and die.¹

In short, the existentialist conscience, the existentialist resolve, cuts off human nature from nature as well as man from man. These are mortal weaknesses in *Sein und Zeit*, and in any philosophy which seriously and consistently draws on it for inspiration. An adequate successor to existentialism

¹ Heidegger's later treatment of 'physics' does not alter this essential narrowness. He moves between Being and human being, but develops no adequate conception of nature. See Löwith, *op. cit.*, p. 61 ff.

must transcend both these limitations, which may in fact derive from a single root. But at the same time, we must admit, an adequate successor to existentialism should continue to acknowledge in some form, however modified by its new context, the validity of Heidegger's central concept: of the responsible person, whose Being is grounded in the tension of facticity, forfeiture and freedom.

IV

The Kantian Heritage

Image imagination!
Try if you can
Uncover weedgrown pathways,
Unreason's plan:
Some recondite relation
Of God and man.

E. Sewell

I

We have been looking, so far, at Heidegger the existentialist. But Heidegger is an ontologist. He has, on his own account, but one theme: the quest for Being. Within this one seeking, *Sein und Zeit* was only trying, in the words of a disciple, to clear a space in order to face the infinite question of Being with the finite powers of man.¹ If, then, we are to interpret Heidegger's work as a whole, or even *Sein und Zeit* in any relation to what its author intended, we have to face, more directly than we have done so far, the problem of his ontology and what it means. This is a difficult task. I have mentioned earlier the linguistic obstacles to following out Heidegger's arguments in detail. But there is, for the present writer, still another problem. The later writing, in its main tenor, turns aside, as we said at the outset, from finitude to Being: Being

¹ M. Müller, *Existenzphilosophie im geistigen Leben der Gegenwart*, Hamburg: F. H. Kerle Verlag, 1945, p. 54.

which withholds itself from or gives itself to us, hides or illumines: Being before whose inexhaustible and elusive nature the sharp, harsh contours of *my* precarious existence are blurred and lost. In the course of this 'conversion', the concepts centring in time and finitude which were so vivid and emphatic in *Sein und Zeit*, and from which its influence flowed, fade into a shadowy background. Now this may be for Heidegger a reasonable change of stress. But if one has felt the power of the earlier formulations, as many have, without really taking to heart the ontological frame in which, admittedly, they were always lodged, it is a very hard change to follow. The one truth, the one convincing contact with reality seems lost, and we find ourselves wandering on what Heidegger calls his 'thought paths' in a formless mist.

The best way I have found to deal with this difficulty is to examine, as a transitional work, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*), a study published by Heidegger in 1929 in connection with the programme for the projected second part of *Sein und Zeit*. This book forms a good taking-off place from which to look both ways: back to *Sein und Zeit* and ahead to the new treatment of Being. It is Heidegger's most lucid text, restating with comparative clarity the ontological theme of the earlier book. It anticipates also in briefer form the conclusion of the *Introduction to Metaphysics*. And finally, it is of interest both for what it says about Kant and for what it reveals, indirectly, about Heidegger's

thought in relation to Kant and the history of philosophy since Kant.

2

The 'Kant-book', as it is usually called, is an analysis of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in relation to what Heidegger calls the problem of fundamental ontology (das Problem der Fundamentalontologie). He presents three principal theses about the *Critique*: (1) that its central theme is the finitude of man; (2) that this theme is grounded in Kant's conception of the nature of our minds as (a) essentially temporal and (b) essentially active or creative; (3) that in preparing the Second Edition Kant turned back from his deepest insight to rely more heavily on the stable, but deadening framework of logic. From this analysis Heidegger proceeds to the enunciation of a programme for fundamental ontology: in effect an apologia for *Sein und Zeit*, together with a hint of the work that lies ahead.

Heidegger's interpretation of Kant, like all his historical exegesis, is highly coloured by preoccupation with the needs of his own thought. In fact Professor Löwith cites this book as an arch example of the irresponsible and egocentric use of texts for which Heidegger is rightly notorious.¹ Yet there is something to be learned from all three theses. The second in particular constitutes, or at any rate implies, an important insight into the structure of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

There has been much argument about the role

¹ Löwith, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

of space and time in Kant. In the first major division of the *Critique*, the Aesthetic, where he is considering the purely passive aspect of the mind—the way experience comes to us—Kant finds that space and time are the two media in which appearances appear. He calls them the forms of the outer and inner sense respectively. In the second part of the *Critique*, the Analytic, he is dealing with the active aspect of mind: that is, with the leading questions which, in all our experience of things, we have always already put to nature and to which, in Kant's view, we have given definite and unequivocal answers. In other words, experience does not simply come to us, it comes interpreted by our active categorizing. The objective, ordered experience we in fact do have could not be objective, could not be ordered, could not, therefore, be experience, Kant believes, if this were not so. Our minds have laid down laws for nature within which alone we can make sense of our experience—understand, manipulate, even perceive it in an orderly and intelligible way. Now the argument by which Kant proves this most fundamental thesis of his theory of knowledge bears an intimate and unique relation to time. He starts with subjective time: what would now be called, perhaps, a kind of minimal, sensory stream of consciousness—just the flow of one datum after another; and he proves that even this thin, ghostly relic of our full-bodied world presupposes the ordering and unifying activity of mind. The rules for such unification, the formal concepts by which the mind orders

its experience, are what Kant calls categories, such as substance, cause, and so on.

But concepts in themselves, as Kant had declared at the outset of the *Critique*, are empty. The activity of abstract thought alone can never give them content, any more than, on the other side, the passive, temporal flow of 'givens' could order itself, without such activity, into an intelligible world.

How are these two disparate sides of experience united? How do the empty categories actually make contact with the factual but meaningless flow of sensory data? Here, again, to account for the ordered experience we actually do have, we must presuppose a power of the mind to make it ordered: not, however, a power of abstract thought simply, but of imagination. It is the faculty which Kant calls 'productive imagination' that effects this all-important mediation; and it does so, again, in reference to the temporal relations from which the argument began. The inner stream-of-consciousness time is transformed, by imaginative creation, into stable and homogeneous temporal patterns; and by the same act the empty concepts of substance or cause receive imaginative, or better, imaginable content. So by this one, two-sided metamorphosis, imagination creates—or rather has always already created—uniform temporal patterns corresponding to each category, in terms of which our formal legislation for experience becomes applicable to its sensuous content. So the category of substance becomes

permanence, cause becomes uniform temporal succession, and so on.

Now it has seemed to at least one very eminent Kant scholar strange that this whole argument should be grounded in time, not in space and time.¹ For has not Kant said in the first division of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that these *two* are the forms of all our perceptions? When he is analysing the presuppositions of all our experience, which in the main is surely spatio-temporal; when, moreover, he is concerned in particular with the presuppositions of physical science, which has certainly to do with relations in space, why concentrate exclusively on time? This is where Heidegger's Kant-book has something to say that is all-important for the study of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. We cannot, Heidegger says, understand the first stage of Kant's argument, the Aesthetic, until we have read the whole of the succeeding proof and turned back to it again. One may, I think, elaborate on this remark as follows. When Kant is dealing with the passive aspect of mind, as he is at the start, he finds time and space occurring alongside one another as sensuous media. But later, when he is considering the active role of the mind in shaping and creating experience, he moves *from* subjective awareness, which is temporal, *through* the imaginative construction of temporal frameworks, such as succession and permanence, *to* the establishment of a full-blooded objective world in space *and* time. Thus the work of the productive

¹ H. J. Paton, *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience*, London, 1936.

imagination, in transforming the empty categories into sensuous patterns, *must* be limited to time. Space is in fact reintroduced in the next and closing stage of the argument, in reference to 'the ground of the possibility of the objects of experience'. It is only with *objects* that space re-enters the picture. The whole dynamic of the argument turns, as Heidegger rightly maintains, on the concept of time, and in particular on the mediating power of imagination in relation to time. Moreover, as Heidegger is also right in maintaining, it is a progressive argument: as Caird, the neo-Hegelian critic, saw it, a dialectical argument. It is too easy, in view of the cumbersome systematic apparatus of the Kantian *Critiques*, to forget this; and to have reminded us of it, as Heidegger has done in the Kant-book, is a signal service to philosophical scholarship.

In order to acknowledge this service, however, I have gone far afield from Heidegger's own ontology and even from the mood of his argument on Kant. For despite his genuine insight into the structure of Kant's greatest work, it must be admitted that the 'time' and the 'creative imagination' Heidegger finds in the *Critique of Pure Reason* are in large part grafts from his own thought. It is but too patently his own 'Zeitlichkeit', his own 'Entwurf', the creativity of the will projecting its own world, that he has read back into Kant. Of the smoothly flowing, scientific time of the critical philosophy he has made an inward, existential temporality; and the productive imagination, which is limited by

Kant to a purely theoretical task, he identifies, in a most unjustifiable way, with the whole of human spontaneity: with the will of the Practical Reason itself. This is at odds, as I hope we shall see shortly, with the whole purpose and scope of Kant's philosophizing.

The same kind of criticism holds of Heidegger's other theses. There is something right, yet something wrong and twisted about each of them. To return to the first thesis: the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Heidegger says, is, like his own fundamental ontology, concerned primarily with the finitude of man. This is true, of course, in an obvious way, insofar as Kant's phenomenalism is grounded in an awareness of the restricted nature of our human powers of knowing. But the finitude of man in Kant is the finitude of a created being in a created universe, not the more intensely felt finitude of a being cast strangely into an absurdly given world to face there the terror of his own non-being.

Kant said in his lectures on anthropology that philosophy asks four questions:

1. What can I know?
2. What ought I to do?
3. What may I hope?
4. What is man?

the fourth being a summation of the other three. Heidegger relies heavily on this Kantian formulation, but with a characteristic twist. He points out, truly enough, that for Kant the 'metaphysics of

metaphysics' (as Kant himself described his subject in a letter to his friend Herz) was equivalent to the study of man. But that the study of man is the study of finitude, Heidegger proves, further, by a very strange analysis of the first three questions. The three auxiliary verbs (*können* (can), *sollen* (ought), and *dürfen* (may)), he says, all imply finitude. So they do. Of God, of an Infinite or Archetypal Intellect, as Kant would say, one could not assert that He ought or He may. The case of 'können' may not be so obvious; yet if infinite power is necessarily actual, one could not say either 'He can', but only 'He does'. So far so good. But why *three* questions? What is the difference between them? To see this we must look not only at 'können', 'sollen', and 'dürfen', but at the three principal verbs, *wissen* (know), *tun* (do), *hoffen* (hope). These Heidegger entirely ignores. Yet what is basic for the critical philosophy is precisely the relation, *in* our human finitude, between our powers of knowing, our obligation to act and our privilege of hoping. It is in their dependence on Christian hope that knowing and doing, in Kant, are both united and kept apart. Because as creatures we are both flesh and spirit, our knowing is limited by the bonds of sense. Because we are spirit as well as flesh, our doing can rise to rightness and aspire to sanctity. In fact, it is precisely by considering the three questions, and the tension, balance and harmony that unite them, that we can see how finitude in the Kantian Enlightenment differed, because of its religious ground, from

finitude in the century of existentialism and despair.

In the critical philosophy the knowledge of nature has been confined to appearances. We know, not things in themselves, but the way in which they appear to us through the schematizing media of time and space. This knowledge is general, but phenomenal only, and therefore partial. We can know nature neither as a secret substratum nor as a grand totality. In this sense our finitude is apparent in the answer to the question: what can I know? But then alongside the 'starry heavens above us' there is Kant's other object of reverence: the moral law within—the good will, acting out of respect for the law which its own freedom imposes on it. It is this moral self which we know not as appearance merely but as it really is. But we know it only practically, in and through the experience of duty in its struggle against passion and interest—and it is *only* the moral self that we thus know, not Descartes's thinking substance with all its medieval faculties intact. Thus, in contrast with earlier cosmologies, matter and mind, though still co-ordinated in one system of reason, are each reduced: one from reality to appearance, the other from the whole substantial self, judging, feeling and willing, to the active will, the moral agency only. And our finitude appears too, though in a different aspect, in the answer to the question: What ought I to do?

Now both the stability and the inner tension of this dual structure are theologically guaranteed.

God made us as flesh *and* spirit: as sensuous beings we must, on one side of our nature, perceive reality through the media of time and space, and our active categorizing is confined to the manipulation of things as they appear in these two perceptive forms. On the other side, as free beings, we know the right and our duty to conform to it. And corresponding to these two functions of our minds is a double guarantee, not often explicitly expressed, but on which the stability and unity of Kantian reason entirely depend. On the one hand, the universality and permanence of the categories through which we interpret nature are assured by the fact that God made Adam and all his descendants—or perhaps better Euclid and all his descendants—to think in this way and no other. On the other side, the moral law, though said to be independent, is nevertheless given security through the theological postulates of God and immortality which are invoked in its support: i.e. through the answer to the third question, What may I hope? And it is this question also, bridging the gulf between the first and second, between our sensuous and our spiritual nature, that enables Kant to conceive of the fourth question: What is man? in its totality.

Kant's four questions, looked at in this way, suggest also the transition from the Kantian situation to our own, and the reason why, in the contemporary situation, *Sein und Zeit* should have had the influence it did. The third question is no longer a common subject for philosophical discussion; it is hard to grasp even what Kant meant by it. And

the wholeness of the fourth question has suffered accordingly. Philosophy has tended to split into two camps, one rising from an analytical interest in knowledge, Kant's first question; the other from a primarily moral interest, Kant's second question. In each case the Kantian inheritance is basic; but in each case the Kantian critique, which implied a limitation of traditional ontology, is narrowed further still. On the theoretical side, the systematic knowledge of appearances, deprived of the twin supports of Euclid and the Book of Genesis, narrows to the scope allowed by contemporary empiricism—to the apprehension of sensory phenomena organized by linguistic usage. Modern analytical philosophy is the *Critique of Pure Reason* confined in its scope and shaken in its sense of permanence by non-Euclidean geometry and agnosticism. So, for example, when philosophers trained in this tradition prepare to reconsider the possibility of metaphysical thinking, it is to Kant's criticism that they return as their starting point. But on the other side, the philosophy of practical reason, the stable order of the moral law, becomes, when deprived of its theological supports, the record of the individual struggling to live morally without such support. This is the *leit-motif* of existential philosophy. For the existentialist, like Kant, views man as nature and more than nature: but each man, not generically and comfortably all the sons of Adam or Euclid—each man in his own unique, finite, final situation, for whom the generic is not comfort but betrayal—each man faced with the

task of becoming what he might be in this 'world he never made'. So we have in our time on the one hand a reversion to Hume, whom Kant thought he had refuted—we have, in other words, the search for objectivity in appearance; and on the other we have the search for actuality and significance in the will. Each extreme, of course, presents itself as a totality. Existentialism offers an interpretation of 'world' through the medium of personal existence. And the analytical or empirical school attempts to interpret morals with 'scientific objectivity'. Yet each has only a fragment of a philosophy to work with. Each is a limiting position which is unable to illuminate further the range and variety of experience which it is the philosopher's business to illuminate.

I have dealt with two of Heidegger's three theses about Kant. His third point sheds light also, indirectly, on the same historical situation. There is, he holds, a peculiar tension between the dynamic of Kant's argument and the rigid logical structure in which it is housed. His principal contention is that Kant faced in the Transcendental Imagination a great unknown which would, one infers, have led him on to *Sein und Zeit* if he had dared to pursue it, but from which in the Second Edition he had already turned back. This historical thesis is very feebly supported. There is little evidence of such a radical alteration in Kant's position between the first and second editions; and if he had altered radically his conception of imagination and its role, he would surely have rewritten the section on

imagination, the Schematism, which stands unchanged.¹ But, again, the tension Heidegger delineates between the spontaneity of mind as making rules for nature and the fixity of the intellectual framework it creates is characteristic precisely of the created mind as Kant believed it functioned. It is not for Kant, but for us who are no longer 'enlightened', that the dynamic of the mind creating the meaning of its world brings that mind to dread and despair. The contradiction between this dizzying experience and the validation of a stable logic lies, not in Kant's own thought, but in the later destiny of the Kantian inheritance. Looking back from our point of reference we may—and from the point of view of *Sein und Zeit* we must—see an argument that points two ways: to a complex but dead and mechanical logical framework, or to creativity—and the risk of nothingness. For Kant

¹ Heidegger's evidence consists principally in the fact that Kant altered in the second edition the two chief passages in which the Transcendental Imagination had been counted as a separate function of the mind. The second, A 115, Heidegger admits, disappeared with the revision of the Transcendental Deduction as a whole; but it seems to me clear that the first, A 94, which also referred to the three syntheses of the Transcendental Deduction, had to be dropped in connection with the same revision. Heidegger mentions also a third emendation: Kant in his personal copy of the *Critique* changed the reference to imagination as 'eine unentbehrliche Funktion der Seele' to read 'des Verstandes'. But this may easily have been simply the result of Kant's dislike of the general and uncritical term 'soul'. It is striking, as against this, that he left unaltered the passage on the Schematism as 'a hidden art in the depths of the human soul'. (A 141, B 181.) What is definitive, in any case, is that he did not revise the Schematism at all.

these two directions, both of them essentially, and within well-defined limits, belonged to the created nature of the human intellect. Yet to describe the tension between them as effectively as Heidegger has done is to shed new and important light on the critical philosophy itself, and to illuminate also our relation to it. It is to suggest how and why Kant's four questions should, in our time, have fallen apart from one another, why there should be in the residue of the Kantian tradition a philosophy of arrogance or a philosophy of despair but not a philosophy of hope.¹

3

This view of the destiny of Kantian criticism, and of the historical role of *Sein und Zeit* represents, however, from Heidegger's point of view, a total misconception. What he meant to show in the Kant-book was his own position as heir of Kant, not through a further narrowing of Kant's scope, but through the restoration of fundamental ontology to its proper status. Kant, he suggests, had been on the track of this, but had turned back from the 'unknown' which threatened to overturn the supremacy of logic. Heidegger's programme is to pursue more unflinchingly this central ontological goal: to come to a conceptual grasp of Being through study of what Kant envisaged only as an 'unknown root' of our mental powers: of imagina-

¹ For the theistic ground of Kant's thought, see G. Krüger, *Philosophie und Moral in der Kantischen Kritik*, Tübingen, 1931. Unfortunately, I have not had access to Krüger's essay on Kant's doctrine of time in the Heidegger *Festschrift* of 1950.

tion, that is, of human creativity in its finite, temporal nature. It is this programme which Heidegger proceeds to outline in the later sections of the Kant-book.

How, through studying finitude, are we to understand Being? Our search is not for the essentials of human nature, let alone for any principles of ethical or practical bearing. Our search is the quest for Being: 'die Seinsfrage'. We are surrounded by things, things that are, and we ask what makes them *be*: that is, we ask about their Being:

In der Frage, was das Seiende als ein solches sei, ist nach dem gefragt, was überhaupt das Seiende zum Seienden bestimmt. Wir nennen es das *Sein* des Seienden und die Frage nach ihm die *Seinsfrage*.¹

In the question, what the things that are are as such, we are asking what it is in general that determines the things that are to be the things that are. We call this the *Being* of the things that are and the quest for it the *quest for Being*.

This is Heidegger's theme: his one theme from first to last. But how is it related to human being and the problem of man's finitude?

In asking about Being we are looking for the determining principle that makes things *be*—that is, we must 'know it, explain it as this and this, conceive it'.² But a *concept* of Being (Begriff des Seins)

¹ *Kant und das Problem d. Met.*, p. 213.

² *loc. cit.*; 'Dieses Bestimmende soll im Wie seines Bestimmens erkannt, als das und das ausgelegt, d.h. begriffen werden.'

will be possible only if in some inarticulate but essential way we *already* understand, not only particular things, but the very Being we seek. In fact, without some such initial understanding of the Being that makes things be we could not grasp even the particular things, far less seek a true, conceptual grasp of that Being itself. Therefore, the springboard of the 'Seinsfrage' is 'das Seinsverständnis'—that understanding of Being which it is characteristic of human being already to possess:

So liegt in der Frage τί τὸ ὄν (was ist das Seiende?) die ursprünglichere: *was bedeutet das in jener Frage schon vorverstandene Sein?*¹

Thus in the question τί τὸ ὄν (what are the things that are) there lies the deeper question: *what is the meaning of the Being which is in this question already understood?*

In asking about Being, then, we are seeking to grasp formally and conceptually what 'as human beings we already and always understand': 'The quest for Being as the possibility of the concept of Being arises in its turn from the *preconceptual understanding of Being*' ('aus dem vorbegrifflichen Seinsverständnis').²

In other words, to understand Being we must

¹ *loc. cit.*

² *Kant und das Problem d. Met.*, p. 216: 'Gefragt wird . . . nach der Möglichkeit des Begriffs *dessen, was wir als Menschen schon und ständig verstehen*. . . . Die Seinsfrage als Frage nach der Möglichkeit des Begriffs vom Sein entspringt aus dem *vorbegrifflichen Seinsverständnis*.'

understand our understanding of Being. But this understanding is, for Heidegger, the very deepest root of our finitude. All my handling of things, all my speaking expresses an understanding of Being:

In jedem Aussprechen eines Satzes, z.B. 'heute ist Feiertag', verstehen wir das 'ist' und damit dergleichen wie Sein.¹

In every enunciation of a sentence, for example, 'today is a holiday', we understand the 'is' and therefore with something like Being.

Yet this understanding is by no means a clear conceptual grasp of Being. What is more, through it I betray, not, as would seem at first sight, my power over the things around me: but, conversely, my dependence on them. For I am not master of the things which, and through which, I understand. They confront me, and before them my power of understanding becomes a need. To fulfil this need is essential to me—that is the sort of being (Seiendes) I am. Yet in fulfilling it, dependent though I am on the things to which it is directed, I project myself toward them, become myself through them, and so at the same time, Heidegger says, *let them be* (sein lassen).² So, on the one hand, my Being as human being, as personal existence (Existenz) is 'as mode of Being in itself finitude,

¹ *Kant und das Problem d. Met.*, p. 217.

² *ibid.*, p. 218: 'Der Mensch vermöchte nicht, das geworfene Seiende als ein Selbst zu sein, wenn er nicht überhaupt Seiendes als ein solches sein-lassen könnte.'

and as such possible only on the ground of the understanding of Being';¹ and conversely, 'something like Being can and must be found only where finitude has taken on the mode of personal existence' ('existent geworden ist').²

So, we see, the quest for Being and the quest for human being are one and the same. The primary task of metaphysics necessarily becomes the task of understanding the being who asks about Being. This is the programme of a 'fundamental ontology' (Fundamentalontologie), which must move from Being to finitude as the ground of human being, and to time as the ground of this ground. This programme Heidegger proceeds to sketch in an *apologia* for *Sein und Zeit*, emphasizing its purely ontological theme.

First, 'Alltäglichkeit', everyday existence, is, when 'looked at exclusively from the point of view of fundamental ontology' (lediglich fundamental-ontologisch gesehen),³ 'the mode of Being . . . which is in its essence designed to hold down human being and its understanding of Being, i.e. its original finitude, in forgetfulness' ('die Seinsart. die es ihrem Wesen nach darauf angelegt hat, das Dasein und dessen Seinsverständnis, d.h. die ursprüngliche Endlichkeit, in die Vergessenheit niederzuhalten').⁴ Thus, Heidegger protests:

¹ *Kant und das Problem d. Met.*, p. 219: 'Existenz ist als Seinsart in sich Endlichkeit und als dieses nur möglich auf dem Grunde des Seinsverständnisses.'

² *loc. cit.*, 'Dergleichen wie Sein gibt es nur und muss es geben, wo Endlichkeit existent geworden ist.'

³ *ibid.*, p. 224-5.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 224.

Die existentielle Analytik der Alltäglichkeit will nicht beschreiben, wie wir mit Messer und Gabel umgehen. Sie soll zeigen, *dass* und *wie* allem Umgang mit dem Seienden, für den es gerade so aussieht, als gäbe es eben nur Seiendes, schon die *Transzendenz* des Daseins—das In-der-Welt-Sein—zugrunde liegt. Mit ihr *geschieht* der, obzwar verborgene und zumeist unbestimmte, *Entwurf* des Seins des Seienden überhaupt, so zwar, dass sich dieses zunächst und zumeist ungegliedert und doch im ganzen verständlich offenbart. Dabei bleibt der *Unterschied* von Sein und Seiendem *als solcher* verborgen. Der Mensch selbst kommt als ein Seiendes unter dem übrigen Seienden vor.¹

The existential analysis of everyday existence is not meant to describe how we handle a knife and fork. It is meant to show *that* and *how* the *transcendence* of human being—Being-in-the-world—lies at the basis of all dealings with the things that are, a dealing which seems to take it for granted that there are only the things that are. With this transcendence there *occurs*, although hidden and for the most part indeterminate, the *projection* of the Being of the things that are as such, in such a way that this Being is revealed in the first instance and for the most part as unanalysed and yet as intelligible on the whole. Thus the *difference* between Being and the things that are, *as such*, remains hidden. Man himself appears as one thing that is among the rest of the things.

The unique disposition of dread, also, which forms the bridge from forfeiture to authentic ex-

¹ *Kant und das Problem d. Met.*, p. 225.

istence, is a purely ontological concept, taking human being from the forgetfulness of Being to the confrontation with Nothing which alone can wrest it from its distracted state.¹ The analysis of authentic existence, likewise, in terms of time, is seen to be purely ontological. It is not because, as finite, we are 'temporal' beings, that *Sein und Zeit* is *Sein und Zeit*—but because all the way back to the Greeks 'every battle for Being moves from the beginning in the horizon of time'.² The evidence for this is that the Greek *ὄντως ὄν*, the really real, was the *ἀεὶ ὄν*, the eternal, the forever real. And 'forever', Heidegger points out, is a temporal qualification. Being is that which is permanent, that which is always there. It is defined by what Heidegger calls 'constancy in presence', 'Beständigkeit in Anwesenheit'. For this reason, and for this reason only, Heidegger insists, time was the basic concept of *Sein und Zeit*. Thus the ontological analysis of human being is, for Heidegger, a repetition (Wiederholung) in the existential sense, that is, an inner reliving of the traditional problem of metaphysics. Conscience, guilt, death, historicity, all appear in this framework, and subject to this aim. For if the central problem, ultimately, is the quest for Being, the direct approach to it must be preceded by the metaphysic of human being. The 'transcendence' of human being, the whole struc-

¹ *Kant und das Problem d. Met.*, p. 228: 'Die Angst ist diejenige Befindlichkeit, die vor das Nichts stellt.'

² *ibid.*, p. 230: 'Bewegt sich dann nicht im vornhinein aller Kampf um das Sein im Horizont der Zeit?'

ture of Being-in-the-world must be raised out of its oblivion to explicit self-understanding, before the Being in which its Being is rooted can itself be explicitly sought for or conceived. But the aim, the method and the meaning of the whole enquiry, at every step and in every sentence, are directly and entirely ontological, from the beginning to the end. A single question, a single historical dilemma is expressed in everything Heidegger has written and is still writing. He concludes the Kant-book with a question which in his most recent works he still continues to ask:

Wird sich die Seinsfrage aus all dieser Fraglichkeit wieder in ihrer elementaren Wucht und Weite herausdrängen? Oder sind wir allzusehr schon zu Narren der Organization, des Betriebes und der Schnelligkeit geworden, als dass wir die Freunde des Wesentlichen, Einfachen und Stetigen sein könnten, in welcher 'Freundschaft' (φιλία) allein die Zuwendung zum Seienden als solchem sich vollzieht, aus der die Frage nach dem Begriff des Seins (σοφία)—die Grundfrage der Philosophie—erwächst? Oder bedürfen wir *dazu* erst der Erinnerung? Und so sei dem *Aristoteles* das Wort gegeben:

καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ πάλαι τε καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ ζητούμενον
καὶ ἀεὶ ἀπορούμενον, τί τὸ ὄν . . . (Metaphysik Z 1,
1028 b).¹

Will the quest for Being, questionable as it is, press forth again in its elementary weight and scope?

¹ *Kant und das Problem d. Met.*, p. 236.

Or have we already grown too much the dupes of organisation, of business, and of speed, to be able to be the friends of the essential, simple and steadfast—in which friendship (φιλία) alone we can achieve that turning to what is, as such, from which the question of the concept of Being (σοφία)—the basic question of philosophy—springs? Or for this *too* do we first need a reminder? And so let Aristotle speak: καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ πάλαι τε καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ ζητούμενον καὶ ἀεὶ ἀπορούμενον, τὶ τὸ ὄν . . . (Metaphysics Z 1, 1028 b.)

4

I have been following in some detail the Kant-book's account of its author's basic programme, since it is, as I said at the start, by far the simplest and clearest account he has given. At the same time it seems to me at some crucial junctures demonstrably sophisticated; and it may be well to mark these points before we go on to see how the programme has since developed.

First, and in general, there is a certain unreality (here and in *Sein und Zeit*) in talk about the analysis of human being as ontology. Either *Sein und Zeit* has illuminated what we in fact are, or it has illuminated nothing. If it is, admittedly, not a book of etiquette, neither is it in any but a quixotic sense metaphysics. Insofar as it makes sense it is what Sartre quite correctly calls philosophical anthropology: that is, reflection on the most essential nature of man. Man *is*, certainly, and man thinks about Being, certainly; but to think about man is not to think about Being as such.

This of course Heidegger denies. Other philosophies have become anthropologies: that is part of the illness of our time.¹ But his work is something else. Anthropological, psychological, ethical, epistemological analyses: all these are what he calls ontic, *existentiell*. His method and his matter are not of this kind. But let us ask once again, what can really be meant by the contrary of 'ontic' and 'existentiell'? Only, I should think, *a priori*. What is ontic is based on what *is*, on experience. The ontological, from which proper 'existential' concepts spring, must then be independent of, prior to, particular factual existence: *a priori*. But what, in all honesty, can a writer mean when he talks about an *a priori* account of human being? Kant's *a priori* is entirely intelligible, because it is discovered by asking what we must presuppose in order to account for the experience we do in fact have; and it is valid only to the limits of such experience. But Heidegger professes no such self-limiting method. This is simply human being analysed—where, how, for what?

It may be said that 'ontology' in *Sein und Zeit* in fact means phenomenology. Certainly Heidegger was at the time of writing that work still very much under the influence of his master Husserl, whom he has since denounced. And he did at the start of *Sein und Zeit* describe it as a phenomenological analysis of human being. But whether or no he was successful in attempting to follow Husserl's method, the fact remains that phenomenology, according to

¹ *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 86.

his own account, is simply the method of dealing with the subject matter of ontology. The work is ontology. To that we must return.

What, then, is the ontology undertaken in *Sein und Zeit*? I can find no adequate answer. The concepts of world and forfeiture, of dread and resolve and finitude, all these are valid and fruitful concepts, just precisely because of and to the extent of their *ontic* import, because they bear on and illuminate our experience of men, of what they are and have been and will still be. One might say, perhaps, that if these concepts prove universally valid they become *a priori*: men would no longer be men if they ceased dying, dreading death, fleeing that dread in business and gossip. In the same way every universal statement, if accepted as universal, takes on a *a priori* character. It becomes a presupposition of experience, rather than a generalization from it. But all such distinctions—*a priori/a posteriori* or ontological/ontic—are, where they are meaningful, distinctions of degree. There are indeed more and less general truths, more and less fundamental beliefs; but there are no truths, no beliefs, entirely unfounded in our living and thinking experience and entirely without bearing on it. If we can ever attain true universality—a kind of almost *a priori*—in our account of human nature, it must be by the simple method that Hobbes prescribed:

He that is to govern a whole nation, must read in himself, not this, or that particular man; but

man-kind: which though it is hard to do, harder than to learn any language, or Science; yet when I shall have set down my own reading orderly, and perspicuously, the pains left another, will be only to consider, if he also find not the same in himself. For this kind of doctrine admitteth no other demonstration.¹

Apart, moreover, from my general objection, that the analysis of human being cannot properly be called 'ontology', I find myself unable at several particular points to accept Heidegger's reasoning. For one thing, there is the relation between finitude and Being *via* the 'Seinsverständnis'. This seems to me doubly fallacious. First, our understanding of Being, which appears a great power in us, is turned into a want or a need. Now it is of course in fact the case that we depend on the Being we seek to understand; we did not make any of the natural things around us, including ourselves—we have to try to understand them. Such, if you will, is our finitude. But in *Sein und Zeit*, Verstehen, understanding, was equated with 'Entwurf', the projection of what lies ahead through our creative self-appropriation of an apparently alien world. It was our strength rather than our weakness. It seems in fact to be both. The odd thing is that when Heidegger moves between these two aspects of understanding he does it by a kind of trick, not by relating them *within* a full conception of understanding, in terms of

¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Introduction.

which they would both make sense. The reason for this, I believe, is—to put it in traditional language—that he lacks any theory of universals. He offers us no conception of the nature of generally valid concepts in reliance on which we could rationally anticipate and so far shape the future, nor in deviation from which we could judge our knowledge to be ignorance, our wealth a want. In short, Heidegger, ontologist or no, lacks the very concept which is basic, in some form or other, to every great ontology. Without this, every account of understanding is a trick.

But if the link from Understanding to Being is shaky, the step in the opposite direction is truly a plunge into the abyss. Not only, Heidegger says, is our understanding the mark of our finitude, but only where finitude is, can Being be. Only our finitude *lets* Being be. Surely the sophistry of this is too patent for comment. True, we find Being, we find it in the mould and fashion of our own projection, we shape, as Kant has taught us, our way of finding it. But it is a plunge into the most wildly irresponsible idealism to say that therefore we ‘let it be’, that something like Being can be only ‘where finitude has taken on existence’: ‘wo Endlichkeit existent geworden ist’. The statement is verbally clear, even eloquent, but as far as meaning goes, it is mystification pure and simple.

Finally, there is once more a double fallacy in Heidegger’s closing argument on time and Being. First there is his usual sleight of hand with ground and consequent. *Sein und Zeit* dealt with time, he

says, not because we happen to be temporal creatures, marked by birth and death and a life-span stretching between, but because it is in the nature of Being itself that every battle for it must take place in the horizon of time. This again, I submit, is pure mystification. If we were not in fact temporal creatures, temporal conscious creatures, facing and failing to face our dissolution, if we had not all somewhere in us the Ivan Ilyitch whom Tolstoi painted, if in short 'we found not the same in ourselves', *Sein und Zeit* would be not seventy or eighty or ninety but one hundred per cent nonsense. It is not one hundred per cent nonsense precisely because we *are* conscious time-bound beings and because Heidegger once understood and expressed something about us that is true.

Such ground-consequent reversal, however, is so common a device in Heidegger as to be almost a convention. The other side of the closing argument is more startling. Every battle for Being, we are told, has been fought from the beginning in the horizon of time. Witness: what? The fact that the Greeks called the really real, τὸ ὄντως ὄν, the eternal, that which always is, τὸ ἀεὶ ὄν. One hardly knows how to comment on this. For surely it is the *contrast* with time, with change, with becoming, that demands a concept of Being as stable, as unchanging, as 'forever'. One can understand, though one may not like it, the need to conceive of time, in itself so elusive and unintelligible, as the image of eternity. But to conceive of eternity as a mode of time is in itself most strange, and stranger

still, as Heidegger takes it, as an interpretation of Greek thought. In fact, when one considers that the formula he gives for Being, 'Beständigkeit in Anwesenheit', is the formula he is later to elaborate in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, and that the whole nexus of concepts centring in finitude is henceforward as good as lost from view, one can only guess that this whole argument is an excuse of Heidegger to himself for leaving the theme of 'Zeitlichkeit' behind in order to turn, as he tries to do, to Being itself.

Let us proceed, then, at last, to see how he fares in this attempt.

V

The Path to Being

Johannes kommer til den rene Vaeren, og kan ikke komme tilbage igen.

John comes to pure Being and can't get back again.

S. Kierkegaard, *Johannes Climacus*

I

We have—the Kant-book has told us—a preconceptual understanding of Being; but the concept of Being is wanting. We live among things that are, we are ourselves, we understand these things and ourselves, and through this understanding are and become ourselves, yet the Being through which all these things are and become eludes us. This is at once our destiny and the destiny of Being, the history of the West since Parmenides and the history of Being itself whose hiddenness, even whose nothingness, is of its essence. It is in order to penetrate this hiddenness, to reach beyond this nothing, that we must turn back, according to Heidegger, beyond Kant, beyond Christianity, beyond Aristotle, beyond Plato, to Heraclitus and Parmenides, who, far from disagreeing, shared the original Greek insight into Being in its solidarity with what is and with our awareness of it;¹ an

¹ *Einf.*, p. 74: 'Heraklit, dem man im schroffen Gegensatz zu Parmenides die Lehre des Werdens zuschreibt, sagt in Wahrheit dasselbe wie jener. Er wäre sonst nicht einer der Grössten der grossen Griechen, wenn er anderes sagte.'

awareness first distorted by Plato, destined to shrink in our distracted, technological time to complete forgetfulness. For in our concern with things, with the hard objects of positive science and the tangible successes of commerce and engineering and welfare, we ignore, in the literal sense of failing to know, our proper task, our higher human lot: to be shepherds and watchers of Being—that Being in which and out of which we are, but for which, in our folly, we do not yet even know how to ask. To learn to seek for Being, then, is, for us as philosophers—nay, as men (for philosophy is the vocation of man)—the one sacred task. What does this seeking mean?

The most extensive and systematic answer that Heidegger has given to this question we may find in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, published in 1953, on the basis of a lecture delivered in 1935. Since it is in complete harmony with his other recent publications, it can safely be taken as representative of his later thought, despite the much earlier date of the original lecture. In fact, a number of Heidegger's comparatively late publications date from work of the early thirties, and I think it is fair to say that one can take almost any of these as representative of the whole period since *Sein und Zeit*.

The intention of the *Introduction to Metaphysics* is to guide us in the direction of a true and serious asking of the question: What is Being? This question is demanded by our historical situation, and is our only possible salvation in that situation. To depict

this metaphysical-historical crisis, to fill us with a sense of it, is Heidegger's aim.

He begins, not historically, but with the most abstract of questions, the 'basic question of metaphysics', which in his formulation runs: 'Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?' 'Why is there anything at all and not rather nothing?' The addition 'and not rather nothing' is essential to the question, he tells us, since without it we might lose ourselves purely in 'das Seiende', the things that are. In order to penetrate beyond them to their Being, we must 'hold them down into nothing', sense truly the alternative of nothingness. This is a task impossible for science, and folly from the perspective of faith; but it is precisely that folly, Heidegger says, that constitutes philosophy.

His first question, however, he finds, depends on and presupposes another question: 'How is it with Being?' 'Wie steht es um das Sein?' And it is this question which in its turn is rooted in history: in the phenomenon of nihilism. When we try to look Being in the face, to consider what it is that is, we can find nothing to say: Being, as distinct from any particular thing, is in fact almost nothing. Nietzsche, who expressed beyond all others the crisis of our time, called Being 'einen Dunst', a haze, and its designation, he said, was 'nur der Name für einen grossen Irrtum', only the name for a great error. Hegel, too, Heidegger pointed out in the Kant-book, equated pure Being with Nothing. Then perhaps our search is a mere quixotism, a fighting of windmills, a search for—Nothing. So

Nietzsche thought. But can this be so? Heidegger asks:

Ist das Sein ein blosses Wort und seine Bedeutung ein Dunst oder birgt das mit dem Wort 'Sein' Gemeinte das geistige Schicksal des Abendlandes? ¹

Is Being a mere word and its meaning a haze or does what is meant by the word 'Being' hold the spiritual destiny of the West?

It is the second alternative which Heidegger defends. Nietzsche, he believes, was mistaken: but tragically and deeply mistaken, 'a last victim of a long error and neglect' but 'as this victim', the bearer of our destiny, 'the unacknowledged witness to a new necessity'.² For it may be in ourselves, in our own history, that this 'nothingness' of Being lies:

Liegt es am Sein, dass es so verworren ist und hängt es am Wort, dass es so leer bleibt, oder liegt es an uns, dass wir bei allem Betreiben und Erjagen des Seienden doch aus dem Sein herausgefallen sind? Und liegt dies gar nicht erst an uns, den Heutigen, auch nicht nur an den nächsten und entferntesten Vorfahren, sondern an dem, was von Anfang an durch die abendländische Geschichte zieht, ein Geschehnis, zu dem alle Augen aller Historiker nie hinreichen werden und das doch geschieht, vormals, heute und künftig? Wie, wenn Solches möglich wäre, dass der Mensch, dass

¹ *Einf.*, p. 28.

² *loc. cit.*

Völker in den grössten Umtrieben und Gemächten zum Seienden Bezug haben und dennoch aus dem Sein längst herausgefallen sind, ohne es zu wissen, und dass dieses der innerste und mächtigste Grund ihres Verfalls wäre? . . .

Das sind Fragen, die wir hier nicht beiläufig und gar fürs Gemüt und die Weltanschauung stellen, sondern Fragen, in die uns jene aus der Hauptfrage notwendig entsprungene Vorfrage zwingt: Wie steht es um das Sein?—eine nüchterne Frage vielleicht, aber auch eine sehr nutzlose Frage. Aber doch eine *Frage*, die Frage: ist das 'Sein' ein blosses Wort und seine Bedeutung ein Dunst oder das geistige Schicksal des Abendlandes? ¹

Is it the fault of Being, that it is so confused, and does it depend on the word that it remains so empty, or is it our fault that with all our bustle and pursuit of things that are we have nevertheless fallen out of Being? And is it, not especially the fault of us today, not only of our nearest and remotest ancestors, but of a happening which runs from the beginning through the history of the West, a happening to which all the eyes of all the historians will never penetrate, and which nevertheless has been happening, is happening and will continue to happen? What if it were possible that man, that nations, in their grandest activities and power designs, should have to do with things that are and yet have long ago fallen out from Being without knowing they had done so, and that this should be the deepest and mightiest ground of their decline?

These are questions which we put at this point, not parenthetically, or for the good of our souls, or for the

¹ *loc. cit.*

sake of a world-view, but questions to which we are driven by that pre-question which arose necessarily out of our chief question: the question 'How is it with Being?'—a sober question perhaps, but also a very useless question. And yet a *question: the question*: is "Being" a mere word and its meaning a haze or the spiritual destiny of the West?

It is, in short, our history, our wandering from Being, our loss of Being, to which, at last, the root question of metaphysics points. And, still metaphysically-historically, Heidegger continues:

Dieses Europa, in heilloser Verblendung immer auf dem Sprunge, sich selbst zu erdolchen, liegt heute in der grossen Zange zwischen Russland auf der einen und Amerika auf der anderen Seite. Russland und Amerika sind beide, metaphysisch gesehen, dasselbe; dieselbe trostlose Raserei der entfesselten Technik und der bodenlosen Organisation des Normalmenschen. Wenn die hinterste Ecke des Erdballs technisch erobert und wirtschaftlich ausbeutbar geworden ist, wenn jedes beliebige Vorkommnis an jedem beliebigen Ort zu jeder beliebigen Zeit beliebig schnell zugänglich geworden ist, wenn man ein Attentat auf einen König in Frankreich und ein Symphoniekonzert in Tokio gleichzeitig 'erleben' kann, wenn Zeit nur noch Schnelligkeit, Augenblicklichkeit und Gleichzeitigkeit ist und die Zeit als Geschichte aus allem Dasein aller Völker geschwunden ist, wenn der Boxer als der grosse Mann eines Volkes gilt, wenn die Millionenzenzahlen von Massenversammlungen ein

Triumph sind—dann, ja dann greift immer noch wie ein Gespenst über all diesen Spuk hinweg die Frage: wozu?—wohin?—und was dann? ¹

This Europe, wretchedly blinded, forever on the brink of self-slaughter, lies today in the great pincers between Russia on the one hand and America on the other. Russia and America are, from a metaphysical point of view, the same: the same desolate frenzy of technology unleashed, and of the rootless organisation of the Average Man. When the furthestmost corner of the globe has been technologically conquered and opened to economic exploitation, when any event whatsoever in any place whatsoever at any time whatsoever has become accessible with any speed whatsoever, when we can 'experience' simultaneously an attempt on the life of a king in France and a symphony concert in Tokyo, when time is no longer anything but speed, momentariness and simultaneity, and time as history has vanished from all the life of all the nations, when the boxer passes as the great man of a people, when the millions numbered at mass meetings are a triumph—then, yes, then, the question still grips us like a ghost through all these phantoms: what for?—where to?—and what then?

Here, Heidegger tells us, his own people, the people of the centre, are called to step in:

Wir liegen in der Zange. Unser Volk erfährt als in der Mitte stehend den schärfsten Zangendruck, das nachbarreichste Volk und so das gefährdeste Volk und in all dem das metaphysische Volk. Aber aus dieser Bestimmung, deren wir gewiss sind, wird sich dieses Volk nur

¹ *Einf.*, p. 28–9.

dann ein Schicksal erwirken, wenn es *in sich selbst* erst einen Widerhall, eine Möglichkeit des Widerhalls für diese Bestimmung schafft und seine Überlieferung schöpferisch begreift . . .

Fragen: Wie steht es um das Sein?—das besagt nichts Geringeres als den Anfang unseres geschichtlich-geistigen Daseins *wieder-holen*, um ihn in den anderen Anfang zu verwandeln. Solches ist möglich. Es ist sogar die massgebende Form der Geschichte, weil es im Grundgeschehnis ansetzt. Ein Anfang wird aber nicht wiederholt, indem man sich auf ihn als ein Vormaliges und nunmehr Bekanntes und lediglich Nachzumachendes zurückschraubt, sondern indem der Anfang ursprünglicher wiederangefangen wird und zwar mit all dem Befremdlichen, Dunklen, Ungesicherten, das ein wahrer Anfang bei sich führt.¹

We lie in the pincers. Our people, standing in the centre, feels the sharpest pressure from the pincers; the people richest in neighbours and so the people most imperilled and, withal, the metaphysical people. But out of this calling, of which we are certain, this people will be able to achieve for itself a destiny only if it first forms *in itself* an echo, a possibility of the echo of this calling, and understands creatively its own inheritance . . .

To ask: how is it with Being?—that means nothing less than to *re-call* the beginning of our historical-spiritual existence, in order to transform it into the new beginning. Such a thing is possible. It is indeed the decisive form of history, because it originates in the most basic event. But a beginning is not repeated

¹ *Einf.*, p. 29.

by screwing oneself back to it as something that once was, and is now familiar, and has simply to be imitated. No, the beginning must be begun again *more radically* and with all that a true beginning brings with it—all that is strange and dark and unassured.

Before proceeding with the approach to Being—the forerunner of the new beginning—Heidegger delineates further the ‘darkening of the world’ (Weltverdüstern) which constitutes our present state. In fact, the nihilism that is the twin destiny of humanity and Being is here and elsewhere his constant concern. The domination of our world by science and technology, the whole fixed framework of the natural and social sciences—all this is, for him, metaphysically speaking, the expression of the single truth: that we live in untruth: that we have forgotten Being for the sake of beings, that Being itself has become ‘a haze and an error’. Heidegger’s essays on ‘The Question of Technique’, ‘The Age of the World View’, ‘Wherefore a Poet?’, ‘What is Thought?’, large sections of the *Introduction*, all reiterate this theme.

Take such a conception as ‘world view’ (Weltbild), which Heidegger analyses in one of the essays in *Holzwege* (1950). The ‘world’ can be a ‘view’, Heidegger says, only because science, with its uniform motions and measurements, has levelled out and rigidified the content of the world within the strictly confining bounds which its rationalization permits. Within these bounds, in turn, everything is regulated, planned, and made useful. ‘Research’, the planned systematic co-ordination

of tasks, comes to dominate the pursuit and organization of learning. The kind of thing that *can* be planned and co-ordinated, the manufacture of gadgets (das Herstellbare) becomes the chief goal of intellectual endeavour, and the departments of research, in accordance with the demand for practical, realizable tasks, come to be sharply cut off from one another—and from Being.

In this process, moreover, mind—the human spirit, which should be the shepherd of Being—is itself debased; and it is this aspect of the situation which Heidegger stresses in the work now before us. First, mind is misunderstood as ‘intelligence’, the faculty of logic. So conceived, it comes to be considered purely practical, a sort of intellectual gadget for making more gadgets. In further consequence, its products are organized and ‘cultivated’ alongside other such devices:

Sobald diese werkzeugliche Missdeutung des Geistes einsetzt, rücken die Mächte des geistigen Geschehens, Dichtung und bildende Kunst, Staatsschaffung und Religion in den Umkreis einer möglichen *bewussten* Pflege und Planung. Sie werden zugleich in Gebiete aufgeteilt. Die geistige Welt wird zur Kultur, in deren Schaffung und Erhaltung zugleich der einzelne Mensch sich selbst eine Vollendung zu erwirken sucht. Jene Gebiete werden Felder freier Betätigung, die sich selbst in der Bedeutung, die sie gerade noch erreicht, ihre Massstäbe setzt. Man nennt diese Massstäbe einer Geltung für das Her-

stellen und Gebrauchen die Werte. Die Kulturwerte sichern sich im Ganzen einer Kultur nur dadurch Bedeutung, dass sie sich auf ihre Selbstgeltung einschränken: Dichtung um der Dichtung, Kunst um der Kunst, Wissenschaft um der Wissenschaft willen.¹

As soon as this misinterpretation of mind as a tool sets in, the powers of intellectual and spiritual activity, poetry and fine art, statesmanship and religion, move into the sphere of a possible *conscious* cultivation and planning. At the same time they are split up into areas. The spiritual world becomes Culture, in the creation and maintenance of which, at the same time, the individual person tries to procure his own fulfilment. Those areas become fields of free activity, which sets itself standards in whatever significance it just happens to achieve. These standards of validity for production and use are called values. Cultural values are assured of meaning in the whole of a culture, only by limiting themselves to their validity for themselves: poetry for poetry's, art for art's sake, science for the sake of science.

Nor is this the final degradation. The next step is the apologetic display of 'cultural' products as 'bits of décor and ornamentation' which demonstrate that we are not barbarians—as in the technique of Communist propaganda. The works of mind collapse out of their artificial isolation, into trimmings of a ruthlessly practical, metaphysically alienated state.

2

Heidegger is, of course, by no means alone in his critique of our 'needy time'. What distinguishes his

¹ *Einf.*, p. 36.

view of modern decadence is the notion that the whole story is told, essentially, in Greek philosophy. By the time of Aristotle the degeneration was complete, and the intellectual history of the west for some twenty-three hundred years has been simply the aftermath of a development long since completed.

What was it that happened between the time of Parmenides and Plato? Heidegger touches on this question at numerous points in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, in the first part in discussing the meaning of *physis*, usually, he says, mistranslated 'nature', in the second, à propos of his extended grammatical exegesis on the infinitive 'to be'. This is an exposition of 'Sein' as, for the Greeks, 'Ständigkeit': a strange excursus, which contrives to equate *physis* as 'Walten' (rule) with *kyros* as 'Sammlung' (gathering), as well as with Heraclitus' *polemos*, the struggle that was said to be father of all and king of all—and to introduce, without any justification whatsoever, Heidegger's own conception of 'world' into the midst of it all. I could not, if I would, analyse in detail these philological fancies, but I may refer the reader to the critiques of Heidegger's historical method by either Gerhard Krüger or Karl Lowith, which may, in my opinion, be taken as authoritative.¹ They are most fair-minded and scholarly, and as applicable to Heidegger's most recent publi-

¹ K. Lowith, *op. cit.*, and G. Krüger, 'M. Heidegger und der Humanismus,' *Studia Philosophica*, vol. IX (1949), pp. 93-129.

The whole story, Heidegger finds, is told in the contrast of these two conceptions:

So wird bereits am Anfang der abendländischen Philosophie sichtbar, wie die Frage nach dem Sein notwendig die Gründung des Daseins einschliesst. . . .

Diese anfängliche Eröffnung des Wesens des Menschseins nennen wir *entscheidend*. Allein sie wurde als der grosse Anfang nicht bewahrt und festgehalten. Sie hatte etwas ganz anderes zur Folge: jene dem Abendland nachher geläufige und auch heute in der herrschenden Meinung nicht erschütterte Definition des Menschen als des vernünftigen Lebewesens. Um den Abstand dieser Definition von der anfänglichen Eröffnung des Wesens des Menschseins sichtbar zu machen, können wir den Anfang und das Ende formelhaft gegeneinanderstellen. Das Ende zeigt sich in der Formel: $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma = \zeta\tilde{\omega}\rho\omicron\nu \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\nu \epsilon\chi\omicron\nu$: der Mensch, das Lebewesen, das die Vernunft als Ausstattung hat. Den Anfang fassen wir in eine frei gebildete Formel, die zugleich unsere bisherige Auslegung zusammenfasst: $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\varsigma = \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma \alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\nu \epsilon\chi\omicron\nu$: das Sein, das überwältigende Erscheinen, ernötigt die Sammlung, die das Menschsein innehat und gründet.

Dort, am Ende, ist zwar ein Rest des Zusammenhangs von Logos und Menschsein, aber der Logos ist längst in ein Vermögen des Verstandes und der Vernunft veräusserlicht. Das Vermögen selbst ist auf das Vorhandensein von Lebewesen

besonderer Art gegründet, auf das ζῶον βέλτιστον das bestgeratene Tier (Xenophon).

Hier, am Anfang, ist umgekehrt das Menschsein in die Eröffnung des Seins des Seienden gegründet.¹

So we can see at the very beginning of western philosophy, how the question of Being necessarily includes the foundation of human being. . . .

This original revelation of the essence of being human we call *decisive*. But it was not preserved and held fast as the great beginning. It had quite a different result: that definition of man as a rational animal which was afterward current in the West and which in the prevailing opinion, is not shaken even today. In order to exhibit the distance of this definition from the original revelation of the essence of being human, we can compare the beginning and the end as expressed in formulæ. The end appears in the formula: ἄνθρωπος = ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, the organism that has reason as an endowment. The beginning we express in a freely devised formula, which at the same time summarizes our exposition so far: φύσις = λόγος ἀνθρώπων ἔχων: Being, the overpowering appearance, necessitates Gathering, which possesses and founds the Being of man.

There, at the end, there is indeed a remainder of the relation between Logos and being human, but Logos has long been externalised into a faculty of intellect and reason. This faculty itself is based on the factual occurrence of organisms of a special type, on the ζῶον βέλτιστον, the most successful animal (Xenophon).

Here, at the beginning, on the contrary, being human is grounded in the revelation of Being.

This completes Heidegger's extended exposition of the Parmenidean fragment, which in conclusion he

¹ *Einf.*, p. 133-4.

has contrasted with the traditional formula. He is well aware that his analysis is, to say the least, highly unorthodox:

Im Blickfeld der gewöhnlichen und herrschenden Definitionen, im Blickfeld der christlich bestimmten neuzeitlichen und heutigen Metaphysik, Erkenntnislehre, Anthropologie und Ethik, muss unsere Auslegung des Spruches als eine willkürliche Umdeutung erscheinen, als ein Hineindeuten von solchem, was eine 'exakte Interpretation' nie feststellen kann. Das ist richtig. Für das übliche und heutige Meinen ist das Gesagte in der Tat nur ein Ergebnis jener bereits sprichwörtlich gewordenen Gewaltsamkeit und Einseitigkeit des Heideggerschen Auslegungsverfahrens. Es darf und muss hier jedoch gefragt werden: Welche Auslegung ist die wahre, jene, die die Blickbahn ihres Verstehens einfach übernimmt, weil sie darein geraten ist und weil diese sich als geläufig und selbstverständlich anbietet; oder aber jene Auslegung, die die gewohnte Blickbahn von Grund aus in Frage stellt, weil es doch sein könnte und in der Tat so ist, dass diese Blickbahn gar nicht zu *dem* hinweist, was es zu sehen gilt?

Allerdings—das Aufgeben des Geläufigen und das Zurückgehen in die fragende Auslegung ist ein Sprung. Springen kann nur, wer den rechten Anlauf nimmt. An diesem Anlauf entscheidet sich alles; denn er bedeutet, dass wir selbst die Fragen wieder wirklich *fragen* und in

diesen Fragen die Blickbahnen erst schaffen. Doch dieses geschieht nicht in schweifender Beliebigkeit und ebensowenig im Anhalt an ein zur Norm erklärtes System, sondern in und aus geschichtlicher Notwendigkeit, aus der Not des geschichtlichen Daseins.¹

In the perspective of the usual and prevailing definitions, in the perspective of modern and contemporary metaphysics, epistemology, anthropology and ethics, which are conditioned by Christianity, our exposition of the saying must seem an arbitrary reversal, a reading into the text of matters that an 'exact interpretation' can never determine. This is correct. For common and contemporary opinion what we have said is in fact only a result of that already proverbial arbitrariness and onesidedness of the Heideggerian exegetical method. Yet it may and must be asked here: Which exposition is the true one: the one that simply takes over the perspective for its understanding, because it has happened on it and because it offers itself as one that is current and taken for granted; or that exposition which fundamentally questions the usual perspective, because it could be and in fact is the case that this perspective does not in the least point to *that* which it is our task to see?

To be sure—the renunciation of the current and the retreat to an exposition that questions is a leap. Only he can leap who takes the right run at it. In this run all is decided; for it means, that we ourselves once again really *ask* the questions and create the perspectives, in and through these questions. But this happens, not in random roving, and just as little in the attachment to a system declared to be a norm, but in and out of historical necessity, out of the need of historical existence.

¹ *Einf.*, p. 134.

We have here, in this double formula and its implications, the core of Heidegger's ontological-historical thesis. This is what, as ontologist, he has to say, and all his favourite themes revolve around this centre: the rootedness of the pre-Socratic mind in Being and our subsequent alienation from that one life-giving, light-bearing source.

His theory of truth, for example, which he introduces here and which he has expounded also elsewhere,¹ tells the same story of the great Greek beginning lost to us long ago by the Greeks themselves. For the pre-Socratic philosophers, Heidegger believes, truth, ἀ-λήθεια, un-forgetfulness, was the un-hiddenness of Being (Unverborgenheit). 'Nature loves to hide,' said Heraclitus, and the revelation of what lies behind this hiding is truth. Truth was a property of Being through which man knew his own rootedness in Being, if at the same time his strangeness in Being. For Parmenides, as we saw, νοεῖν and εἶναι, awareness and its 'object', were, not separated by the categorizings of science or religion, but at one.

Now of course all these words, 'property', 'object', etc. which I find myself driven to employ, are post-Aristotelean to say the least, and wide of the mark of what Heidegger is saying, or of the gnostic manner in which he says it. The point is really that *all* our traditional separations, like subject/object, substance/accident, property/relation, and so on—in fact, all the words we use to talk about philosophical problems—are so many veils

¹ Cf. especially *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit*.

over Being, so many chasms between ourselves and Being. To understand the true pre-Socratic insight we must penetrate far into the first roots of our own language, cutting out ruthlessly all the deceiving growth of centuries.

If, then, we can *really* look back to the pre-Socratics, Heidegger declares, we see that for them truth was the unhiddenness of Being. In the *Republic* of Plato we find, as against this first and greatest insight, the beginning of a less profound and misleading conception. In the analogy of the cave with its shadows of imitations of real things, in the 'knowledge-line' with its parallel hierarchies of knowns and knowers, and most fundamentally, Heidegger avers, in the very conception of the 'idea' itself, the seeming, the appearance (*ἰδέειν*), which is cut off from the flow of our perceptions, we have the beginning of the view afterwards crystallized by Aristotle and since then become traditional: that truth is *correctness*. Truth belongs now not to Being but to propositions, and consists in their 'correspondence' with 'facts'. This loosening of truth from Being, this isolation of thought from Being, led on directly, in Heidegger's view, to Nietzsche's dictum that truth is—not correctness, let alone a quality of Being—but simply a form of error. And so Being too becomes at last, with Nietzsche (in whom, for Heidegger, all metaphysics culminated), 'ein Dunst und ein Irrtum', a haze and an error—nothing.

Heidegger's philosophical appeal to poetry has the same root. This again is one of his constant

themes: in the essays on Hölderlin and Rilke, and in the *Introduction* also. Language in Heidegger's use is magical; hence the preponderance of word-play in his argument. But language is magical, because, as he says:

die Worte und die Sprache sind keine Hülsen, worin die Dinge nur für den redenden und schreibenden Verkehr verpackt werden. Im Wort, in der Sprache werden und sind erst die Dinge.¹

words and language are not shells in which things are simply packaged for the commerce of speech and writing. It is only in the word, in language, that things become and are.

This does not hold, to be sure, of our trivial gossip, of our hard and empty scientific or pseudo-scientific terminology. Such talk, like the 'culture' it expresses, has lost its hold on Being. It is rootless, like the 'Massenmensch' whose complacent mediocrity it conveys. But in its true origin language is different:

Die Sprache kann nur aus dem Überwältigenden und Unheimlichen angefangen haben, im Aufbruch des Menschen in das Sein.²

Language can have begun only out of the overpowering and uncanny, in the break-through of man into Being.

In this first and essential function, however, language is poetry:

¹ *Einf.*, p. 11.

² *ibid.*, p. 131.

In diesem Aufbruch war die Sprache als Wortwerden des Seins: Dichtung. Die Sprache ist die Urdichtung, in der ein Volk das Sein dichtet.¹

In this break-through language as the verbalization of Being was: poetry. Language is the primal poetry in which a people composes Being.

And conversely, therefore, it is the great poets who may restore language to its primal power. Thus Heidegger grounds his own ontological grounding of language—language conceived as the house of Being, the foundation of Being—in the interpretation of Hölderlin, of such lines as ‘dichterisch wohnet der Mensch’ or ‘seit ein Gespräch wir sind’. Our nihilistic destiny—and the hope of our redemption—are tied to Hölderlin’s ‘Wozu Dichter in dürftiger Zeit?’ And the appeal to poetry is an appeal, also, to prophecy. ‘The poet names the holy. The poet speaks Being.’ (‘Der Dichter nennt das Heilige, der Dichter sagt das Sein.’)² It is the poets, says the Rilke essay in *Holzwege*, who bring a trace of the vanished gods into the cosmic night.³ Man as such, as Nietzsche said, is a venture, ‘ein Wagnis’. The poets are those who venture more, ‘die Wagenderen’, who are ‘on the track of the holy’, which is, at the same time, that which is

¹ *loc. cit.*

² *Was ist Metaphysik?*, 1943, Nachwort. Cf. *Holzwege*, p. 353: ‘Das Wort des Sängers hält noch die Spur des Heiligen.’

³ *Holzwege*, ‘Wozu Dichter?’, p. 294: ‘Sie (i.e. the poets) bringen den Sterblichen die Spur der entflohenen Götter in das Finsternis der Weltnacht.’

‘healed’ and ‘whole’: ‘auf der Spur zum Heilen’.¹ Through them we may hope, perhaps, to recover that illumination of Being—‘die Lichtung des Seins’—from which we have so long gone astray.² And it is first and foremost through the poet who himself felt so keenly the tie with classical antiquity, through Hölderlin, that we are to sense something of the god who is ‘near yet hard to grasp’, a god remote from theology or piety or any of the ordinary avenues of religious custom or feeling, but who presides over that long-lost Being of which ‘die Seinsfrage’ is in search. Only through poetry, in short, only through the inspiration of the greatest poets, may we hope to reach back to the lost insight of Parmenides and Heraclitus, Pindar and Sophocles: to the radiance of Being which once illumined the first brief dawn of western thought.

3

These—the account of truth and of language and poetry—are applications rather than amplifications of the search for Being. One is still left to ask what Being is. It is to Being we are told to turn, it is Being whose shepherds we are, whose nearness and shelter we seek. But what is *meant* by this small and almost empty word? Perhaps, indeed, we cannot say. Perhaps even the question, put like that, betrays our simplicity. For Heidegger’s admitted aim is but to lead us in the direction of *asking* ‘die

¹ *Holzwege*, ‘Wozu Dichter?’, p. 293–4.

² *ibid.*, p. 41–3; *Einf.*, p. 16.

Seinsfrage', that is, to prepare us for the effort of attempting truly and seriously to re-live the first and great beginning of western thought. And in our alienation from Being, in the emptiness of our haste-ridden, technique-driven 'culture', we are perhaps not yet ready for such a true 'recollection' of our long-lost roots. To ask, even to *ask*, the 'Seinsfrage', Heidegger says, means in the last analysis to wait, 'even a lifetime long'—'sogar ein Leben lang':¹

Denn es hasset
der sinnende Gott
unzeitiges Wachstum.

For the God
who muses hates
untimely growing.

In this situation we cannot ask for answers, as we might ask for an answer to the question 'What is a mouse?' or 'What is an electron?' Being is beyond all 'whats' and 'whiches', all separations and distinctions. It is not anything that is, not anything we can point to or define, but it is whatever it is that makes all things be.

Yet Heidegger does give some hints of the perspective within which Being itself may be found. They are repetitions and elaborations of the suggestion already given us in the *Kant-book*, where we were told: 'Sein heisst Beständigkeit in Anwesenheit': 'Being is constancy in presence', in paraphrase perhaps: Being is Being-always-there—

¹ *Einf.*, p. 157.

though that of course suggests 'Vorhandenheit', *objective* presence, which is what Being certainly is *not*. For it is not there, like a table or chair, but is the greater—what shall we call it?—X? that is always, constant, permanent in and behind and beyond all the things in and of our world.

This notion of 'constancy' or 'permanence' or 'presence' is dealt with in three contexts in the *Introduction*. First, 'Ständigkeit' appears in the discussion of the grammar of 'Being', or rather of the verb 'to be', for it is on the infinitive, from which the verbal noun 'das Sein' derives, that Heidegger concentrates. In fact his whole account of 'sein' consists in an analysis of the Greek term for 'infinitive', in conjunction with his view of the Greek conception of Being. Being for the Greeks, Heidegger says, was 'permanence, Ständigkeit'. But the adjective 'ständig', 'fixed' or 'permanent', derives from 'stehen', 'to stand'. Being is what stands, or takes a stand. The word for 'mood' in Greek grammar, in contrast with this, is ἑγκλισις, which means, etymologically, a leaning; and the infinitive is the mood that leans in no particular direction: ἑγκλισις ἀπαρεμφάτικος. Why this meaning of the technical term for infinitive should bear in particular on the infinitive 'to be' rather than on 'to walk' or 'to live' or any other infinitive, Heidegger does not explain. He goes on instead to the etymological aspect of his question and notes that the different roots of 'sein' (ist, bin, -wesen) derive from three disparate verbs, meaning roughly 'live', 'grow' and 'dwell'. In this admixture and in

the indefiniteness of the infinitive he finds the explanation for the 'thinness' of the meaning of 'to be'. 'Ständigkeit' is, for the moment, left in abeyance.¹

Next, the section on 'The Question of the Essence of Being' ('Die Frage nach dem Wesen des Seins') again touches briefly on the same conception. Despite the thinness of meaning of 'sein', it turns out that we do have some definite sense of what we mean especially by the third person singular 'ist' (is). This is specified as follows:

Die Begrenzung des Sinnes von 'Sein' hält sich im Umkreis von Gegenwärtigkeit und Anwesenheit, von Bestehen und Bestand, Aufenthalt und Vor-Kommen.²

The sense of 'Being' is confined within the circumference of contemporaneity and presence, of continuity and stability, sojourn and occurrence.

Once more, however, this cryptic hint is left unelucidated, though we are told that it reveals the intimate union of Being with 'our secret history', ('unserer verborgenen Geschichte'), and at the same time with the history of Being:

Die Frage, Wie steht es um das Sein? muss sich selbst in der Geschichte des Seins halten, um ihrerseits die eigene geschichtliche Tragweite zu entfalten und zu bewahren.³

The question, How is it with Being? must keep within the history of Being, in order to discover and to preserve on its side its own historical scope.

¹ *Einf.*, pp. 46, 50, and part II, *passim*.

² *ibid.*, p. 69.

³ *ibid.*, p. 70.

Finally, the last and fullest part of the work, which considers four directions of the 'limitation of Being' ('die Beschränkung des Seins'): Being distinguished from Becoming, Appearance, Thought, and Ought ('Werden, Schein, Denken, Sollen') concludes with a return to the same nexus of conceptions:

Die Bestimmtheit des Seins wurde durch die Erörterung der vier Scheidungen vor Augen geführt:

Sein ist im Gegenhalt zum Werden das Bleiben.

Sein ist im Gegenhalt zum Schein das bleibende Vorbild, das Immergleiche.

Sein ist im Gegenhalt zum Denken das Zugrundeliegende, Vorhandene.

Sein ist im Gegenhalt zum Sollen das je Vorliegende als das noch nicht oder schon verwirklichte Gesollte.

Bleiben, Immergleichheit, Vorhandenheit, Vorliegen—sagen im Grunde alle dasselbe: *ständige Anwesenheit*, ὄν als οὐσία.¹

The determination of Being was brought to view through the exposition of the four divisions:

Being is, in balance to becoming, permanence.

Being is, in balance to appearance, the permanent model, the unchanging.

Being is, in balance to thought, the fundamental, that which is actually there.

Being is, in balance to ought, that which is presented as what ought to be and is or is not already realized.

¹ *Einf.*, p. 157.

Permanence, unchangingness, there-ness, being-present—all say at bottom the same thing: *constant presence*, ὄν as οὐσία.

So far Heidegger takes us on the path to Being—no further, in the elaboration of a ‘system’ or ‘doctrine’, than the Kant-book had already taken us. Yet we cannot, in Heidegger’s terms, protest. For it was precisely in demanding a doctrine or a system that philosophy, and man as philosopher, went astray. Ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, man seizing with formula and principle on Being, has already lost his home in Being. This *is* the history of Being, that we have lost it because we would formulate and manipulate and control—and *our* history, that we speed blind and dazed over the globe in search of the things that are, unmindful of the one search that befits us: the quest for Being itself.

VI

Betrayals

What then? sang Plato's ghost, What then?

W. B. Yeats

There was never a philosopher more insistent than Heidegger that his thought has not developed, that it has been, from start to finish, all of a piece. We must consider, in conclusion, how far this is true: whether *Sein und Zeit* and the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, which we have taken as representative of the later publications, do in fact express the same philosophy.

Heidegger is very careful to make it appear, externally, that they do. In the *Introduction* he not only insists again, as he has often done, on the ontological theme of *Sein und Zeit*, but takes pains also to keep human being in the forefront of the question of Being. He imports into Parmenides the 'δείνων' of the Sophoclean chorus: 'There are many strange things . . .', and renders it 'unheimlich' ('uncanny'), so that the uneasiness of the existential person in his world may appear in the Greek world too.¹ 'World' itself he inserts highhandedly into a Heraclitean context. This, as a matter of fact, is a slip: for in *Sein und Zeit* he had declared the necessity of asking why Parmenides—for him at one with Heraclitus—had overlooked the phenomenon of world.² But if we overlook in our turn this tell-

¹ *Einf.*, p. 112.

² *S.u.Z.*, p. 100.

tale passage, the unity of the two texts would seem to be complete. True, they deal with the 'Seinsfrage' in very different directions. The later work treats of the western intellectual heritage, summed up, says Heidegger, in the formula 'Being and Thought'. The earlier dealt with a task still before us: time was, indeed, Heidegger says, the 'guiding perspective' ('die leitende Blickbahn') for the beginning of western thought; but it was a secret, a hidden perspective, and must be rediscovered:

'Sein und Zeit' meint bei solcher Besinnung nicht ein Buch, sondern das Aufgegebene. Das eigentlich Aufgegebene ist jenes, was wir nicht wissen und das wir, sofern wir es *echt* wissen, nämlich als Aufgegebenes, immer nur *fragend* wissen.¹

In connection with such reflections, 'Being and Time' means, not a book, but a task. What is truly a task is what we do not know and what, in so far as we truly know it, that is, as a task, we know only in asking.

On the surface, then, the unity of Heidegger's life work is complete, or nearly so. Yet the two works we have been chiefly considering bear a very different stamp. There is not only the difference in style; there is a very marked difference in calibre. The later work is thin, ill-organized, in part even humdrum and dull. *Sein und Zeit*, with all its weaknesses, has true philosophical power.

To say this is to record perhaps too subjective an impression. One can support it, however, by

¹ *Einf.*, p. 157.

noticing what, despite their avowed harmony, has happened to some of Heidegger's earlier conceptions in his later work. Let us take three such: nothingness, history, and world.

First, nothingness. There is no need to reiterate the role played, in *Sein und Zeit*, by dread, and by its object which is—nothing. Being to death, man facing nothingness: it is the sharp edge of this conception that gives drive and aim to the whole book. Dread, the dread of our own non-being, is the bridge from forfeiture to authenticity, the support of conscience and resolve. Not the colourless abstract consciousness of Locke or Leibniz, but the dramatic, nauseating consciousness of my impending non-existence makes me human: gives form and design to my truly, inwardly finite life. This concept of the dread of death Heidegger is careful to maintain, in a reduced and minimal role, in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*. He finds it, in fact, by a beautifully simple mistranslation, in Sophocles: man who 'comes resourceless to nothing' is said to 'come, resourceless, to—Nothing'.¹ That death vanquishes man, Sophocles does indeed say; but death equated to the Heideggerian nothing is a purely Heideggerian insertion. Apart from this passage, moreover, the Nothingness of *Sein und Zeit* plays very little part in the later publications. But 'nothing' is important, nevertheless, in the later works—and that in two other and very different senses, to which, without excuse or argument, Heidegger moves, as if they *were* the nothing

¹ *Einf.*, p. 112.

of *Sein und Zeit*. One is the conception of nihilism, the conception of the forgetfulness of Being in which we live. This, it is true, was the formal definition of 'Verfallen'. Forfeiture meant, to forget Being for beings; and so far there is, once more, a formal unity in the two periods. Yet it was the human, not the intended ontological meaning that was significant in *Sein und Zeit*. And besides, if we consider more closely the unifying formal definitions we can see how confused the situation is. Nihilism is a kind of general forfeiture, the Decline (Verfall) of the West, the nothingness of forgetting Being. But dread is the mood which awakens human being to conscience, to resolve, to authenticity; to face nothingness, to be 'in nothing', before nothing, is to overcome the forgetfulness of Being, that is, to overcome nihilism. The 'nothing' of dread, therefore, is the very opposite of that nothingness, that alienation from Being, which Nietzsche, according to Heidegger, tragically personified. Again, there is ostensibly a bridge between the two conceptions: for Being itself, we are told, must be held down into Nothingness, it must appear as nothing in order to be. Thus the appendage to the 'Seinsfrage': 'and not rather nothing' (the second new meaning of nothingness) is the ontological offshoot of dread. Like human being, Being itself must confront nothing. The catch phrase of *What is Metaphysics?*: Nothing nothings—das Nichts nichtet—is a true dictum of ontology. But once more, this formal unification removes the human meaning, the truth, of the concept of dread,

and at the same time makes nonsense of the historical theory of nihilism: for if Being must be held down into nothing, then those who live in 'nothing' are those who live truly in Being—not, after all, the lost souls, but the saved.

In short, we have here a purely sophistical intermingling of three concepts. First, there is the concept of the dread of death, of which Heidegger had made distinguished use in *Sein und Zeit*. Secondly, there is the concept of nihilism, on which Heidegger has indeed something to say, but which has been treated with more honesty and cogency by many other writers. And thirdly, there is the concept of Nothing in union with Being. This, again, might be a meaningful, even a supremely great conception, as it is, for example, in the negative theology of Eriugena. Heidegger, however, gives it no such ground in reason or in worship. It appears, rather, as a device designed to let him move, without seeming to move, from the human concept of dread to the ontological horizon of pure Being.

Second, history. Heidegger was acclaimed as a prophet of 'Geschichtlichkeit', as one who carried on the message of Dilthey concerning the unique and living nature of history. In fact, as we saw, he declared that his whole purpose in *Sein und Zeit* was to support the doctrines of Dilthey and Yorck on this subject. He did not do this effectively: for he failed to show how the historical character of the individual's life bears on the broader problems of the history of nations. His 'Geschichtlichkeit' remains that of the individual; his 'Geschick', the

destiny of peoples, is tied to it by a mere pun, not by any solid argument. *Sein und Zeit*, in this connection, leaves its reader with a question: a question that expects an answer. One hopes, at the close of *Sein und Zeit*, that Heidegger will do more with these problems. For it is certainly important for the philosophical interpretation of history to consider how the sense of individual life is related to the understanding of more general issues. It is important to recall that the beginning of the historian's art is the intuitive apprehension of the unique givenness of individual life. As Sir Maurice Powicke put it, when the people in the pages of old chronicles suddenly come to life, it is as if you went to sit down in your armchair and found you had sat on the cat. The 'Geschichtlichkeit' of *Sein und Zeit*, insofar as it bears on the writing of history, would seem to be a philosophical version of 'sitting on the cat'. But then one wants to know, how does the historian go on from there? What is the bridge to 'Geschick'? What is 'Geschichtlichkeit' in its broader application, the conception which it is said that Ranke missed and Dilthey found?

For an answer to this open question we may search the later works in vain. 'History' is omnipresent, but its meaning, like that of dread, has lost its old power and gained nothing new to take its place. The concept occurs in three different contexts, of all of which we have seen examples in the *Introduction*. First, there is the history of Being, which is at the farthest remove from the conception of given, contingent personal history.

This is, in itself, so far as I can tell, an empty conception.

Insofar as the phrase 'history of Being' acquires content, secondly, it becomes history in a different sense, or at least in a different context. It becomes the story, not of Being, but of our understanding of Being. This, of course, is the history of Greek philosophy as Heidegger tells it. What sort of 'history' is this? It starts, reasonably enough, from Heidegger's objection to the methods of nineteenth century 'Geistesgeschichte', which made of Parmenides a 'materialist' or an 'idealist', or of Anaximander with his 'δίκη' and 'ἀδικία' a solid Christian moralist. It is true that this account of pre-Socratic thought was narrow and superficial. But if historians are often dry and foolish, that does not justify our throwing away all sober canons of scholarship and reading what we please of our own thought into ancient texts. We have glanced at some of these tricks of Heidegger's. To consider just one of the examples we have already mentioned: the exposition of Being as 'Ständigkeit' is full of inferences from 'stehen', 'Stand', etc., which are matters of German grammar and etymology, entirely unrelated to the Greek εἶναι or οὐσία. This meaning once given, moreover, Heidegger can proceed to identify οὐσία and φύσις through the fortunate circumstance that 'originate' or 'come into being' in German is 'entstehen'.¹ Again, a play on the German root, with no bearing whatsoever on the meaning of the Greek. Heidegger's

¹ *Einf.*, p. 48.

rhetoric about 'perspectives' notwithstanding, this kind of procedure is, in my opinion, the mark of a dishonest and unhistorical mind. In the broader sweep of Heidegger's history of the west, also, it is strikingly unhistorical and antihistorical, as Krüger has rightly shown, to make no distinction between ancient and modern, to write as if the whole story of the western mind were finished by the time of Aristotle, as if neither Rome nor Christianity had played any substantive part in our tradition. Nor, it seems to me, is it the mark of a just historical sense to equate the spiritual history of the west—even if one saw it whole—with the spiritual history of mankind.

There is a third context, finally, in which Heidegger refers to 'history', 'historical calling', and the like. Of this we have seen two examples, in the exhortation to the German people, and in the summary of the Parmenides-Aristotle story. This is, as Heidegger here describes it, history as present: destiny in the sense of a present task. In terms of the account of *Sein und Zeit*, it seems to resemble more closely history as future. It is a shadow of Nietzsche's conception of monumental history. But, again, this borrowed conception fails to resolve the puzzle left at the close of *Sein und Zeit*. The contrast of true and false, depth and surface history, is put to shrewd historical use, but beyond this we are given no further understanding of what 'history' means. The limited, but genuine 'Geschichtlichkeit' of human being is forgotten, and nothing of substance is put in its place.

Third and last, world. The conception of Being-in-a-world forms both the all-inclusive horizon of *Sein und Zeit* and the limit to which its argument proceeds. Heidegger's analysis of human being, like human being itself, embraces the manifold reality of 'Being-in-a-world', of contingency, forfeiture, transcendence, resolution; and is at the same time held by the same conception within definite and intelligible bounds. Our finitude, reflecting on itself, cannot, however obscure and entangled its thought, stray off into infinity. It remains within the circle of responsible self-criticism and self-appraisal: a circle which, far from being vicious, is in one form or another the only valid method of philosophy. What happens to this horizon of 'world', which confines and controls the finite appreciation of finitude? The concept 'world' is, we have seen, inserted, in the *Introduction*, presumably as a kind of safeguard: to make sure that the old and the new shall seem to coincide. But it has no longer the central position that it had, either in matter or in method. It is no longer my Being-in-a-world, but Being, which presides over this and all being, that is our goal and our guide. Being, however, is elusive; we not only do not know it, we do not even yet know how to ask for it. So this change of course is a loss of direction, a loss of guidance altogether; we may reach here and there and everywhere, no familiar landmark helps us on the way, no Hobbesian canon can guide or check our wanderings with an inward 'aye' or 'nay'. The analysis of human being as Being-in-a-world had

shape and direction; beside it the search for Being itself is 'verschwommen': formless and blurred.

This is not to say that no finite creature can reflect upon infinity. Existentialism itself had its beginning in the work and person of Kierkegaard, for whom the one pressing, tragic dilemma was just that of the finite creature face to face with an infinite God: face to face, yet an abyss away. And it may be that Heidegger, in turning away from finitude, is turning again to religion of a sort. The first step toward nihilism, he says, is the disappearance of the gods; and the vanished gods, the Immortals, the Holy, are often before us in his later work. But again, one can only record, in conclusion, a subjective impression: if he is a prophet, he is a very dubious prophet. For it is not, in the pages of Heidegger, the voice of a man of God that speaks: of a Spinoza or a Dostoyevsky, even a Kierkegaard. Perhaps it is the voice of a seeker after dim and distant goals—but a not quite honest seeker, a lover of intellectual notoriety who knows that his scathing rhetoric will be accepted and admired.

And always he is a petulant and over-anxious self-apologist: concerned to tell us that this high, unintelligible search is all he has ever undertaken—that what he did achieve he never intended or achieved at all. Were it not for his arrogance, it would be a tragic story: the tragedy of an artist who has destroyed his own work.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Martin Heidegger was born on 26 September 1889 at Messkirch in Baden. In 1915 he became Privatdozent in the University of Freiburg im Breisgau, in 1923 Ordentlicher Professor in Marburg, in 1928 Ordentlicher Professor in Freiburg. He was Rektor in 1933.

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